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THE MAN FROM BLANKLEY'S

& OTHER SKETCHES

F. ANSTEY

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THE MAN FROM BLANKLEY'S,

AND OTHER SKETCHES

"MONTAGUE, *don't* SAY YOU WENT AND ORDERED HIM!"

THE

MAN FROM BLANKLEY'S

AND OTHER SKETCHES

[*Reprinted from "Punch"*]

BY

F. ANSTEY

AUTHOR OF "VICE VERSÂ," "VOCES POPULI," "THE TRAVELLING COMPANIONS," ETC.

WITH TWENTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

BY J. BERNARD PARTRIDGE

LONDON

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MRS. TID. I? Certainly *not*, Montague. *You* hired him, and you must get rid of him yourself!

MR. TID. (*uneasily*). 'Pon my word, Maria, it's an awkward thing to do. I almost think we'd better keep him if he comes—we shall have to *pay* for him anyhow. After all, he'll be quite inoffensive—nobody will notice he's been hired for the evening.

MRS. TID. He may be one of the assistants out of the shop for all we can tell. And you're going to let him stay and make us thirteen, the identical thing he was hired to avoid! Well, I shall have to let Miss Seaton dine, after all—that's what it comes to, and this creature can take her down—it will be a little change for her. Gwennie, my pet, run down and tell Seakale that if he hears me ring twice after everybody has come, he's to lay two extra places before he announces dinner. (GWENNIE *departs reluctantly;* MRS. T. *crosses to* MISS SEATON.) Oh, Miss Seaton, my husband and I have been thinking whether we couldn't manage to find a place for you at dinner to-night. Of course, it is *most* unusual, and you must not expect us to make a *precedent* of it; but—er—you seem rather out of spirits, and perhaps a little cheerful society—just for once—— I don't know if it can be arranged yet, but I will let you know about that later on.

MISS SEATON (*to herself*). I do believe she *means* to be kind! (*Aloud.*) Of course, I shall be very pleased to dine, if you wish it.

SEAKALE (*at door*). Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel Gilwattle, and Miss Bugle!

[*Enter a portly old Gentleman, with light prominent eyes and a crest of grizzled auburn hair, in the wake of an imposing Matron in ruby velvet; they are followed by an elderly Spinster in black and silver, who rattles with jet.*

MISS BUGLE (*after the usual salutations*). I hope, dearest Maria, you will excuse me if I am not quite in my usual spirits this evening; but my cockatoo, whom I have had for ages, has been in convulsions the whole afternoon, and though I left him calmer, done up in warm flannel on the rug in front of the fire, and the maid promised faithfully to sit up with him, and telegraph if there was the slightest change, I can't help feeling I ought never to have come.

AUNT JOANNA (*to her host*). Such a drive as it is here, all the way from Regent's Park, and in this fog—I told Gabriel that if he escapes bronchitis to-morrow——

SEAKALE. Mr. and Mrs. Ditchwater! Mr. Toomer!

MR. DITCH. Yes, dear Mrs. Tidmarsh, our opportunities for these festive meetings grow more and more limited with each advancing year. Seven dear friends, at whose board we have sat, and they at ours, within the past twelve months, carried off—all gone from us!

MRS. DITCH. *Eight*, Jeremiah, if you count Mr. Jaunders—though *he* only dined with us once.

MR. DITCH. To be sure, and never left his bed again. Well, well, it should teach us, as I was remarking to my dear wife as we drove along, to set a higher value than we sometimes do on such hospitalities as we are still privileged to enjoy.

MR. TOOMER (*to* MRS. TID.). My poor wife would, I am sure, have charged me with all manner of messages, if she had not been more or less delirious all day—but I am in no anxiety about her—she is so often like that, it is almost chronic.

SEAKALE. Mr. and Mrs. Bodfish! Miss Flinders! Mr. Poffley!

MR. BODF. (*after salutations*). Mrs. Bodfish and myself have just been the victims of a most extraordinary mistake! We positively walked straight into your next-door neighbour's house, and if we had not been undeceived by a mummy on the first landing, I don't know where we should have found ourselves next.

MRS. TID. A *mummy!* How *very* disagreeable; such a *peculiar* thing to have about a house! But we really know nothing about the people next door. We have never encouraged any intimacy. We thought it best.

MRS. BODF. I told their man-servant as we came away that I considered he had behaved disgracefully in not telling us our mistake at once; no doubt he had a motive; people *are* so unprincipled!

LITTLE GWENDOLEN (*drawing* MISS SEATON *into a corner*). Oh, Miss Seaton, what *do* you think? Mother's going to let you dine down-stairs with them—won't *that* be nice for you? At least, she's

"MR. AND MRS. DITCHWATER!"

going to, if somebody comes, and you're to go down with him. He isn't like a *regular* dinner-guest, you know. Papa hired him from Blankley's this morning, and mother and he both hope he mayn't come, after all; but *I* hope he *will*, because I want to see what he's like. Don't *you* hope he'll come? *Don't* you, Miss Seaton, dear?

MISS SEATON (*to herself*). Then *that* was why! And I can't even refuse! (*Aloud.*) My dear Gwennie, you shouldn't tell me all these things—they're secrets, and I'm sure your mother would be very angry indeed if she heard you mention them to *anybody!*

GWEN. Oh, it was only to you, Miss Seaton, and you're *nobody*, you know! And I *can* keep a secret, if I choose. I never told how Jane used to—— [MISS SEATON *endeavours to check these disclosures.*

UNCLE GAB. (*out of temper, on the hearth-rug*). Seven minutes past the hour, Monty—and, if there's a thing I'm particular about, it's not being kept waiting for my dinner. Are you expecting somebody else? or what *is* it?

MR. TID. (*nervously*). Well, I half thought—but we won't wait any longer for him—he is not worth it—ha! there he is—I think I heard the front door—so perhaps I may as well give him——eh?

UNCLE GAB. Just as you like—*my* dinner's spoilt as it is. (*Catching sight of the banner-screen.*) What have you stuck this precious affair up for, eh?

MR. TID. To—to keep the fire off. Maria's idea, uncle—she thought our—hem—crest and motto would look rather well made up like this.

UNCLE GAB. (*with a snort*). Made up! I should think it was! Though what you want to make yourself out one of those good-for-nothing aristocrats for is beyond me. You know *my* sentiments about 'em—I'm a thorough-going Radical, and the very sound of a title——

SEAKALE (*with a fine combination of awe and incredulity*). Lord Strathsporran!

[*There is a perceptible flutter in the company, as a ruddy-haired and rather plain young man enters with an apologetic and even diffident air, and pauses in evident uncertainty as to his host and hostess.*

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PREFACE.

THE Author wishes to express his acknowledgments to Messrs. Bradbury and Agnew, to whom he is indebted for their permission to republish the present collection of sketches, which made their first appearance in the pages of MR. PUNCH; and also for their leave, as the sole proprietors of the copyright, to reproduce Mr. Bernard Partridge's admirable illustrations, without which the volume would have lost its principal attraction.

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THE

MAN FROM BLANKLEY'S

A STORY IN SCENES.

SCENE I.

Breakfast-room at No. 92a, Porchester Square, Bayswater. Rhubarb-green and gilt paper, with dark olive dado; curtains of a nondescript brown. Black marble clock on grey granite mantelpiece; Landseer engravings; tall book-case, containing volumes of "The Quiver," "Mission-Work in Mesopotamia," a cheap Encyclopædia, and the "Popular History of Europe." Time, about 9.45 A.M. MR. MONTAGUE TIDMARSH *is leaving to catch his omnibus.* MRS. T. *is at her davenport in the window.*

MR. T. (*from the door*). Anything else you want me to do, Maria?

MRS. T. Don't forget the turbot—and mind you choose it yourself—and the lobster for the sauce—oh, and look in at Seakale's as you pass, and remind him to be here punctually at seven, to help Jane with the table, and say I insist on his waiting in *clean* white gloves; and be home early yourself, and—there, if he hasn't rushed off before I remembered half—— (MR. T. *re-appears at the door.*) What is it *now*, Montague? I do wish you'd start, and have done with it, instead of keeping Jane at the front door, when she ought to be clearing away breakfast!

MR. T. Very sorry, my love—I was just going, when I met a telegraph-boy with this, for you. I hope there's nothing wrong with Uncle Gabriel, I'm sure.

MRS. T. Don't stand there holding it—give it to me. (*She opens it.*) "Regret impossible dine to-night—lost great-aunt very suddenly. —BUCKRAM." How provoking of the man! And I particularly wished him to meet Uncle Gabriel, because he is such a good listener, and they would be sure to get on together. As if he hadn't all the rest of the year to lose his aunt in!

MR. T. That's Buckram all over. Never can depend upon that fellow. (*Gloomily.*) Now we shall be thirteen at table!

MRS. T. Nonsense, Montague—we *can't* be! Let me see—Uncle Gabriel and Aunt Joanna, two; the Ditchwaters, four; Bodfishes, six; Toomers, eight; Miss Bugle, nine; Mr. Poffley, ten; Cecilia Flinders, eleven, and ourselves—we *are* thirteen! And I know uncle will refuse to sit down at all if he notices it; and anyway, it's sure to cast a gloom over the whole thing. We *must* get somebody!

MR. T. Couldn't that Miss—what's her name?—Seaton dine, for once?

MRS. T. The idea, Montague! Then there would be one lady too many—if you can *call* a governess a lady, that is. And I do so disapprove of taking people out of their proper station!

MR. T. I might wire to Filleter or Makewayt—but I rather think they're both away, and it won't do to run any risk. Shall I bring home Sternstuhl or Federfuchs? Very quiet, respectable young fellows, and I could let one of 'em go off early to dress.

MRS. T. Thank you, Montague—but I won't have one of your German clerks at *my* table—every one would see what he was in a minute. And he mightn't even have a dress-suit! Let me think . . . *I* know what we can do. Blankley supplies extra guests for parties and things, I remember seeing it in the paper. We must hire a man there. Go there at once, Montague, it's very little out of your way, and tell them to be sure and send a gentlemanly person—he needn't

talk much, and he won't be required to tell any anecdotes. Make haste, say they can put him down to my deposit account.

MR. T. I don't half like the idea, Maria, but I suppose it's the only thing left. I'll go and see what they can do for us. [*He goes out.*

MRS. T. I *know* he'll make some muddle—I'd better do it myself! (*She rushes out into the passage.*) Jane, is your master gone? Call him back—there, I'll do it. (*She calls after* MR. T.'S *retreating form from the doorstep.*) Montague! never mind about Blankley's. I'll see to it myself. Do you hear?

MR. T.'S VOICE (*from the corner*). All right, my love, all right! I hear.

MRS. T. I must go round before lunch. Jane, send Miss Seaton to me in the breakfast-room. (*She goes back to her desk; presently* MISS MARJORY SEATON *enters the room: she is young and extremely pretty, with an air of dejected endurance.*) Oh, Miss Seaton, just copy out these *menus* for me, in your neatest writing, and see that the French is all right. You will have plenty of time for it, as I shall take Gwendolen out myself this morning. By the way, I shall expect you to appear in the drawing-room this evening before dinner. I hope you have a suitable frock?

MISS SEATON. I have a white frock with blue velvet sleeves, if that will do—it was made in Paris.

MRS. T. You are fortunate to be able to command such luxuries. All *my* dresses are made in the Grove.

MISS SEATON (*biting her lip*). Mine was made when we—before I——

[*She checks herself.*

MRS. T. You need not remind me *quite* so often that your circumstances were formerly different, Miss Seaton, for I am perfectly aware of the fact. Otherwise, I should not feel justified in bringing you in contact, even for so short a time, with my relations and friends, who are *most* particular. I think that is all I wanted you for at present. Stop, you are forgetting the *menus*.

[MISS SEATON *collects the cards and goes out with compressed lips as* JANE *enters.*

JANE. Another telegram, if you please, m'm, and cook would like to speak to you about the pheasants.

MRS. T. Oh, dear me, Jane! I wish you wouldn't come and startle me with your horrid telegrams—there, give it to me. (*Reading.*) "Wife down, violent influenza. Must come without her.—TOOMER." (*Resentfully.*) Again! and I *know* she's had it twice since the spring—it's too tiresomely inconsid—no, it isn't—it's the very best thing she could do. Now we shall be only twelve, and I needn't order that man from Blankley's, after all. Poor dear woman, I must really write her a nice sympathetic little note—so *fortunate!*

SCENE II.

MRS. TIDMARSH'S *Bedroom. Time,* 7.15 P.M. MRS. T. *has just had her hair dressed by her maid.*

MRS. T. You might have given me more of a fringe than that, Pinnifer. You don't make nearly so much of my hair as you used to! (PINNIFER *discreetly suppresses the obvious retort.*) Well, I suppose that must do. I shan't require you any more. Go down and see if the lamps in the drawing-room are smelling. (PINNIFER *goes; sounds of ablutions are heard from* MR. T.'S *dressing-room.*) Montague, is that you? I never heard you come in.

MR. T.'S VOICE (*indistinctly*). Only just this moment come up, my dear. Been putting out the wine.

MRS. T. You always *will* leave everything to the last. No, don't come in. What? How can I hear what you say when you keep on splashing and spluttering like that?

MR. T.'S V. (*from beneath a towel*). That dozen of champagne Uncle Gabriel sent has run lower than I thought—only two bottles and a pint left. And he can't drink that *Saumur.*

MRS. T. Two bottles and a half ought to be ample—if Seakale manages properly—among twelve.

MR. T.'S V. Twelve, my love? you mean *fourteen!*

MRS. T. I mean nothing of the sort. Mrs. Toomer's got influenza again—luckily, so of course we shall be just twelve.

MR. T.'S V. Maria, why didn't you tell me that before? Because I say, look here!—— [*He half opens the door.*

MRS. T. I won't have you coming in here all over soap, there's nothing to get excited about. Twelve's a very convenient number.

MR. T.'S V. Twelve! Yes—but how about that fellow you told me to order from Blankley's? He'll be the thirteenth!

MRS. T. Montague, *don't* say you went and ordered him, after I expressly said you were not to mind, and that I would see about it myself! You heard me call after you from the front door?

MR. T.'S V. I—I understood you to say that I was to mind and see to it myself; and so I went there the very first thing. The manager assured me he would send us a person accustomed to the best society, who would give every satisfaction. *I* couldn't be expected to know you had changed your mind!

MRS. T. How *could* you be so idiotic? We simply can't sit down thirteen. Uncle will think we did it on purpose to shorten his life. Montague, do something—write, and put him off, quick—do you hear?

MR. T.'S V. (*plaintively*). My love, I *can't* write while I'm like this—and I've no pen and ink in here, either!

JANE (*outside*). Please, sir, Seakale would like a word with you about the sherry you put out—it don't seem to ta—smell quite right to him.

MRS. T. Oh, never mind sherry *now*. (*She scribbles on a leaf from her pocket-book.*) Here, Jane, tell Seakale to run with this to Blankley's—quick . . . . . There, Montague, I've written to Blankley's not to send the man—they're sure to keep that sort of person on the premises; so, if Seakale gets there before they close, it will be all right . . . . Oh, don't worry so . . . . What? White ties! How should *I* know where they are? You should speak to Jane. And do, for goodness' sake, make haste! *I'm* going down.

MR. T. (*alone*). Maria! hi . . . . She's gone—and she never told

UNCLE GAB. That's a fine wine, isn't it, my lord? Not much of *that* in the market now-a-days, I can tell you!

LORD STRATH. (*to himself*). Precious little *here*. (*Aloud.*) So I should imagine, sir.

UNCLE GAB. Your lordship mustn't pass this *entrée*. My niece's cook knows her business, I will say that for her.

LORD STRATH. (*as he helps himself*). I have already discovered that she is an artist.

MRS. TID. (*in displeased surprise*). Then you know my cook *too?* An *artist?* and she seems such a *respectable* person! Pray what sort of pictures does she paint?

LORD STRATH. Pictures? Oh, really I don't know—potboilers probably. [MRS. TID. *glares at him suspiciously.*

CONVERSATIONAL SCRAPS. And when I got into the hall and saw them all sitting in a row with their faces blacked, I said, "I'm sure *they* can't be the Young Men's Christian Association!" . . . . Hysteria? my poor dear wife is a dreadful sufferer from it—I've known her unable to sleep at all except with one foot curled round her neck! . . . . (&c. &c.)

LORD STRATH. (*to himself*). There's no doubt about it—this woman *is* trying to snub me—hardly brings herself to talk at all—and *then* she's beastly rude! What did she ask me here *for* if she can't be civil! If she wasn't my hostess—I'll try her once more, she may know something about antiquities. (*Aloud.*) I suppose Mr. Cartouche keeps his collection in a separate room? I was told he has some hunting scarabs of the Amenhoteps that I am very curious to see.

MRS. TID. (*stiffly*). Mr. Cartouche may keep all sorts of disagreeable pets, for anything *I* know to the contrary.

LORD STRATH. (*to himself, in amazement*). Pets! I'm hanged if I let myself be snubbed like this! (*Aloud.*) I'm afraid you have very little sympathy with his tastes?

MRS. TID. Sympathy, indeed! I don't even know if he *has* any tastes. I am not in the habit of troubling myself about my next-door neighbour's affairs.

LORD STRATH. (*with a gasp*). Your next-door——! (*He pulls him-*

self together.) To be sure—of course not—stupid of me to ask! (*To himself.*) Good Heavens!—these *aren't* the Cartouches! I'm *at the wrong dinner-party*—and this awful woman thinks I've done it on purpose! No wonder she's so confoundedly uncivil! . . . . And Marjory knows it too, and won't speak to me! Perhaps they *all* know it . . . What on earth am I to do? . . . I feel such a fool!

MISS SEATON (*to herself*). How perfectly *ghastly* Douglas is looking! Did he *really* think he was at the Cartouches'? . . . Then—*oh*, what an idiot I've been! It's a mistake—he *doesn't* come from Blankley's at all! I *must* speak to him—I must tell him how——no, I *can't*—I forgot how horrid I've been to him! I should have to tell him I believed *that*—and I'd rather die! No, it's too late—it's too late now!

[MISS SEATON *and* LORD STRATHSPORRAN *sit regarding the table-cloth with downcast eyes, and expressions of the deepest gloom and confusion.*

SCENE VI.

LORD STRATH. (*to himself*). Don't want to make a fuss, but I suppose I ought to do *something*. Good little chap, my host—didn't like to tell me I'd made a mistake; but his wife's a downright vixen. Better make it right with her. (*To* MRS. TID.) I—I'm afraid I ought to have found out long before this what an intruder you must consider me; but your husband——

MRS. TID. Pray say no more. Mr. Tidmarsh chose to act on his own responsibility, and of course *I* must put up with the consequences.

LORD STRATH. (*to himself*). It's hard lines to have to leave Marjory like this; but this is more than I *can*—— (*Aloud.*) After that, of course I can only offer to relieve you of my presence as soon as——

MRS. TID. (*horrified*). Not for *worlds!* I can't have my party broken up *now*. I *insist* on your staying. I—I have no complaint to make of your conduct—*so far!*

LORD STRATH. Very kind of you to say so. (*To himself.*) Pleasant woman this! But I don't care—I *will* stay and see this out; it's too late to go in to the Cartouches now, and I won't leave Marjory till——

(*Aloud.*) Miss Seaton—Marjory—I'm in a most awfully difficult position—*do* let me tell you about it!

MISS SEATON (*penitently*). Oh, Douglas, I—I *know*—I heard. . . . I'm so sorry—I mean, I'm so *glad!* Please forgive me for treating you as I did! . .

LORD STRATH. You *did* let me have it pretty straight, didn't you, Marjory? But, of course, you thought me an impudent cad for calmly coming in to dinner uninvited like this—and no wonder!

MISS SEATON (*to herself*). He doesn't know the *worst*—and he shan't if I can help it! (*Aloud.*) It doesn't matter *what* I thought—I—I don't think it now. And—and—do tell me all you can about yourself!

[*They converse with recovered confidence.*

UNCLE GAB. (*to himself*). For all the notice that stuck-up young swell takes of me, I might be a block of wood! I'll *make* him listen to me. (*Aloud.*) Ahem! My lord, I've just been telling my niece here the latest scandal in high life. I dare say your lordship has heard of that titled but brainless young profligate, the Marquis of Manx?

LORD STRATH. Manx? Oh, yes—know him well—sort of relation of mine. Never heard a word *against* him, though!

UNCLE GAB. (*in confusion*). Oh, I—I beg your lordship's pardon—I wasn't aware—— No doubt I got the name wrong.

LORD STRATH. Ah—or the facts. Great mistake to repeat these things—don't you think? Generally lies.

[*He resumes his conversation with* MISS S.

UNCLE GAB. (*nettled*). It's all very well for you to stand up for your order, my lord; but it's right I should tell you that the Country doesn't mean to tolerate that den of thieves and land-grabbers—I need hardly say I refer to the House of Lords—*much* longer! We're determined to sweep them from the face of the earth. I say so, as the—ah—mouthpiece of a large and influential majority of earnest and enlightened Englishmen!

LORD STRATH. (*to himself*). Fancy the mouthpiece has had quite enough champagne. (*Aloud.*) My dear sir, you can begin sweeping to-morrow, so far as I am concerned. I'm no politician.

UNCLE GAB. (*warming*). No politician! And yet you sit in the

Upper House as one of our hereditary legislators, obstructing the will of the People! Do you mean to tell me there's no incongruity in that!

[*Consternation among the company.*

LORD STRATH. A good deal, I dare say, if I sat there—only I don't—haven't had the honour of being elected at present.

MRS. TID. (*hastily*). He means he—he has other things to do, uncle—don't excite yourself so! (*To* LORD S. *in a whisper.*) You're only *exposing* yourself by talking of what you know nothing about. Surely you know that Peers *aren't* elected!

LORD STRATH. I was under the impression they were—in Scotland; but it's not worth arguing about.

UNCLE GAB. You're evading the point, my lord. I'm trying to put plain sense——

LORD STRATH. (*wearily*). I know—but—a—*why* try? Wouldn't plain nonsense be rather more amusing—at dinner, don't you know?

UNCLE GAB. (*stormily*). Don't think you're going to ride roughshod over *me*, my lord! If you think yourself above your company——

LORD STRATH. I assure you I've no idea what I've said or done to offend you, sir. It was perfectly unintentional on my part.

UNCLE GAB. (*relaxing*). In that case, my lord, no further apology is needed. I—ah—accept the olive-branch!

LORD STRATH. By all means—if I may trouble you for the olives.

UNCLE GAB. (*effusively*). With all the pleasure in life, my lord. And, without withdrawing in any sort or kind from any of my general opinions, I think I express the sentiment of all present when I say how deeply we feel the honour——

LORD STRATH. (*to himself*). Good Lord—he's going to make a speech now! (*Little* GWENDOLEN *enters demurely and draws up a chair between his and her mother's.*) Saved, by Jove! Child to the rescue! (*To her.*) So you're going to sit next to me, eh? That's right! Now what shall I get you—some of those grapes?

GWEN. No, a baby orange with silver paper round it, please.

MISS SEATON (*to herself*). If only Gwennie doesn't—(*Aloud.*) Gwennie, come here for a moment. I want to whisper.

GWEN. What is it, Miss Seaton? [*Rises and comes to* MISS S.'S *chair.*

MISS SEATON (*whispering*). Only, darling, that you must be careful—remember what I told you—you mustn't tell tales or repeat things!

GWEN. Not even if I'm asked, Miss Seaton? . . . No? . . . Would *you* be displeased? Then I won't. (*Returning to her seat and addressing* LORD S. *confidentially.*) Do you know why I've come to sit next to *you?* Because I want to see how you behave. You aren't just like one of our regular dinner-party guests, *are* you, you know?

LORD STRATH. (*meekly*). I'm afraid not, my dear; but you'll be kind to me for all that, won't you?

GWEN. (*primly*). Miss Seaton says we should never be unkind to anybody, *whatever* their position is. And *I* think you're rather nice. I wish papa would have you to dine with us often, but perhaps you're expensive?

LORD STRATH. (*laughing*). I don't know, Miss Gwennie, I've been feeling uncommonly cheap all the evening!

GWEN. (*reflectively*). Mamma always says everything's much cheaper at Blankley's.

MRS. TID. (*to* UNCLE GAB). Growing *such* a big girl, isn't she? and getting on wonderfully with her lessons. I must get her to recite one of her little pieces for you, uncle dear—she does it *so* prettily!

UNCLE GAB. Hey, Gwen—I'll bet you one of these sugar-biscuits you don't know who it is you're chatting away so freely to!

GWEN. Oh yes, I *do*, uncle; but I'm being very kind to him, so that he mayn't feel any *different*, you know!

UNCLE GAB. Upon my word—what will you get into that little noddle of yours *next*, I wonder!

GWEN. (*after deliberation*). Preserved ginger, I *think*—I like ginger better than biscuits. (*To* LORD S.) You can reach it for me.

UNCLE GAB. Come, come, young lady, where are your manners? *That's* not the way to speak to that gentleman. You should say—"Will your lordship be so very kind as to pass the preserved ginger?"

LORD STRATH. (*impatiently*). Please *don't*, Gwennie! I like your own style much the best! [*He helps her to the preserve.*

UNCLE GAB. You mustn't allow the child to take liberties, my lord.

"LET ME ADVISE YOU TO BE VERY *careful.*"

Now, Gwen, suppose you tell me and his lordship here something you've been learning lately—don't be shy, now!

MRS. TID. Yes, Gwennie—tell uncle a little tale—repeat something to him, come, darling!

GWEN. No, I shan't, mamma!

[*She pegs away stolidly at the preserved ginger.*

UNCLE GAB. Hullo! "Shan't" to your mother? *This* how you bring the child up, Maria?

MRS. TID. Not when mother *asks* you to, Gwen? And uncle wanting to hear it so! No? *Why* won't you?

GWEN. Because Miss Seaton told me not to—and I won't, either.

UNCLE GAB. Ha—Miss Seaton seems the supreme authority here, evidently—better get *her* permission, Maria!

MISS SEATON (*distressed*). Indeed, I—I never meant—Gwennie didn't understand me quite—that is all!

GWEN. Oh, Miss Seaton! when you said I wasn't to tell tales or repeat things—you *did* say so!

MISS SEATON. Yes, yes; but that was a different *kind* of tale altogether, Gwennie—you *may* tell a *fairy* tale!

GWEN. (*obstinately*). If I mayn't tell any kind of story I like, I shan't tell any at all—so *there!*

UNCLE GAB. Pretty behaviour, upon my word! Children didn't behave like that in *my* young days, Maria! I should no more have dared to refuse to tell my elders anything they—but it strikes me you leave her too much with her governess—who, by the bye, has been going on with his lordship in a manner that—well, really *I* shouldn't have thought——!

MRS. TID. (*mortified and angry*). I am not at *all* satisfied with Miss Seaton in *many* ways, uncle—you can safely leave her to me!

[*She gives the signal;* LORD STRATH. *opens the door.*

LORD STRATH. (*to* MISS SEATON, *as she passes, last but one*). I—I suppose I shall get a word with you up-stairs?

MRS. TID. (*overhearing—to herself*). I'll take good care he doesn't! (*To* LORD S., *waspishly.*) Let me advise you to be very *careful!*

[LORD STRATH. *closes the door after her, with relief and amazement.*

SCENE VII.

On the Stairs.

MRS. TID. (*detaining* MISS SEATON). I hope you are satisfied with yourself, Miss Seaton? You *ought* to be, I'm sure—after encouraging my own child to disobey me, and behaving as you did with that most ill-bred and impertinent *impostor!*

MISS SEATON (*indignantly*). He is nothing of the sort! Mrs. Tidmarsh, you—you don't understand! *Please* let me tell you about him!

MRS. TID. I have no desire whatever to hear. I am only sorry I ever permitted you to dine at all. It will be a lesson to me another time. And you will be good enough to retire to your own room at once, and remain there till I send for you! [*She passes on.*

MISS SEATON (*following*). But I *must* tell you first what a mistake you are making. *Indeed* he is not——!

MRS. TID. I don't care *what* he is. Another word, Miss Seaton,—and we part! [*She sweeps into the drawing-room.*

MISS SEATON (*outside*). I have done all *I* can! If I could only hope the worst was over! But it doesn't matter much *now*. I know I shall never see Douglas again! [*She goes sorrowfully up to her room.*

SCENE VIII.

In the Drawing-room. Time, about 10. MRS. BODFISH *and* MRS. DITCHWATER *are talking in confidential under-tones on a settee.* MISS BUGLE'S *anxiety concerning her invalid Cockatoo has already obliged her to depart.* MISS FLINDERS *is playing the Ballet Music from "Sylvia" softly in the back Drawing-room.* MRS. GILWATTLE *is lecturing her Niece on a couch by the fire, while little* GWENDOLEN *is in a corner with a picture-book.*

MRS. BODFISH (*in a wheezy whisper*). If he had condescended to make himself agreeable all round, I shouldn't say a *word;* but to sit there talking to that little forward governess, and never an audible word from

first to last—well, I quite felt for poor dear Mrs. Tidmarsh being so neglected at her own table.

MRS. DITCH. Ah, my dear, if she *will* have the aristocracy to dine with her, she must put up with such treatment. I wouldn't stoop to such presumption myself. And, if I *did*, I *would* have a couple of *entrées*, and everything carved *off* the table! He'll go away with such a poor opinion of us all!

MRS. BOD. He must have noticed how the vegetable dishes were chipped! And I'm sure I was ashamed to see she had put out those old-fashioned doyleys with the finger-glasses. I wonder she never thought of getting some new ones. I saw some the other day in the Grove, hand-worked, at only fivepence three-farthings!

MRS. DITCH. I could see *something* was weighing on her mind, or she'd have talked more to him. What is his title? It sounded like "Stratspoddle." I must look it out in my Peerage. Would he be an Earl now, or what?

MRS. BOD. I don't expect he's more than a Viscount, if so much. I do think she might have *presented* us to him, though!

MRS. DITCH. (*with superiority*). It isn't the fashion to introduce, now-a-days. But I consider we are quite entitled to speak to him, if we get an opportunity—in fact, he would think it very odd if we didn't (*&c., &c.*).

MRS. GILWATTLE. Well, Maria, I say, as I said before, don't let it *turn your head*, that's all! Depend upon it, this young nobleman isn't so affable for nothing. He wouldn't dine with you like this unless he expected to get *something* out of it. What that something may be, you best know!

MRS. TID. (*to herself*). A guinea, at the very least! (*Aloud.*) I'm sorry you think my head's so easily turned, Aunt Joanna! If you'd noticed how I behaved to him, you wouldn't say so. Why, I scarcely *spoke* to the man!

MRS. GIL. I was *watching* you, Maria. And sorry I was to see that being next to a member of the nobility overawed you to that extent you could hardly open your mouth. So unlike your Uncle Gabriel!

MRS. TID. (*hurt at this injustice*). Overawed, indeed! I'm sure it

was no satisfaction to *me* to see him here! No, aunt, the only people I welcome at *my* table are those in my own rank of life—relations and old friends like you and the others. And how you can think I was dazzled by a trumpery title when I sent him in with the governess——!

MRS. GIL. Ah, you make too much of that girl, Maria. I've noticed it, and *others* have noticed it. She takes too much upon herself! The *idea* of letting her forbid Gwendolen to recite—no wonder your authority over the child is weakened! I should have *insisted* on obedience.

MRS. TID. (*roused*). I hope I know how to make my own child obey me. Gwendolen, come out of that corner. Put down your book. (GWEN. *obeys.*) I wish you to repeat something to your auntie—what you refused to say down-stairs—*you* know what I mean!

GWEN. Do you mean the thing Miss Seaton said I wasn't to, because you'd be angry?

MRS. TID. (*majestically*). Miss Seaton had no business to know whether I should be angry or not. She is only your governess—*I* am your mother. And I shall be extremely angry if you don't repeat it at once—in fact, I shall send you off to bed. So you can choose for yourself.

GWEN. I don't want to go to bed yet . . . I'll tell, if I may whisper it.

MRS. TID. Well, if you are too shy to speak out loud, you *may* whisper. You see, aunt, I am not *quite* such a cipher as you fancied!

[GWEN. *puts her mouth to* MRS. GILWATTLE'S *ear, and proceeds to whisper.*

SCENE IX.

The Breakfast-room. Time, the same as in the foregoing Scene. MR. TIDMARSH, *after proposing to "join the ladies," much to the relief of* LORD STRATHSPORRAN, *has brought him in here on the transparent pretext of showing him a picture.*

MR. TID. (*carefully closing the door*). I only just wanted to tell you that I don't at all like the way you've been going on. It's not my wish to make complaints, but there *is* a limit!

LORD STRATH. (*hotly*). There *is*—you're very near it now, sir! (*To himself.*) If I quarrel with this little beggar, I shan't see Marjory! (*Controlling his temper.*) Perhaps you'll kindly let me know what you complain of?

MR. TID. Well, why couldn't you say you didn't smoke when my uncle offered you one of his cigars? You must have felt me kick you under the table!

LORD STRATH. I did—distinctly. But I gave you credit for its being accidental. And, if you wish to know, I said I smoked because I do. I don't see why you should expect me to *lie* about it!

MR. TID. I don't agree with you. I consider you ought to have had more tact, after the hint I gave you.

LORD STRATH. It didn't occur to me that you were trying to kick *tact* into me. And, naturally, when I saw your uncle about to smoke——

MR. TID. That was different, as you might have known. Why, *one* cigar is as much as my wife can stand!

LORD STRATH. You—a—wouldn't wish her to smoke *more* than one surely?

MR. TID. (*outraged*). My wife smoke! Never did such a thing in her life! She don't allow *me* to smoke. She wouldn't allow Mr. Gilwattle if he wasn't her uncle. And I can tell you, when she comes down in the morning, and finds the curtains smelling of smoke, and hears you were the *other*, I shall catch it!

LORD STRATH. Sorry for you—but if you had only made your kick a trifle more explanatory——

MR. TID. That's not *all*, sir. When you saw me and my uncle engaged in talking business, what did you cut in for with a cock-and-bull story about the Boxing Kangaroo being formed into a Limited Company, and say the Kangaroo was going to join the Board after allotment? You couldn't really believe the beast was eligible as a Director—an *animal*, sir!

LORD STRATH. Why not? They have *guinea-pigs* on the Board occasionally, don't they? But of course it was only a joke.

MR. TID. You weren't *asked* to make jokes. My uncle doesn't understand 'em—no more do I, sir!

LORD STRATH. No, I gathered that. (*Breaking out.*) Confound it all, sir, what do you mean by this? If you didn't want me, why couldn't you tell me so? You knew it before *I* did! I don't understand your peculiar ideas of hospitality. I've kept my temper as long as I could; but, dash it all, if you force me to speak out, I will!

MR. TID. (*alarmed*). No, no, I—I meant no offence—you won't go and let everything out now! It was a mistake, that's all—and there's no harm done. You got your *dinner* all right, didn't you? By the way, talking of that, can you give me any idea what they'll charge me for this, eh? What's the *regular* thing now?

LORD STRATH. (*to himself*). Extraordinary little bounder—wants me to price his dinner for him! (*Aloud.*) Couldn't give a guess!

MR. TID. Well, considering I sent round and all that, I think they ought to make *some* reduction—y' know. But *you've* nothing to do with that, eh? I'm to settle up with Blankley's?

LORD STRATH. I should say he would prefer your doing so—but it's really no business of mine, and—a—it's getting rather late——

MR. TID. (*opening the door*). There, we'll go up. And look here, *do* try and be a bit stiffer with my uncle. It's too bad the way he goes on my-lording you, y' know. You shouldn't encourage him!

LORD STRATH. I wasn't aware I *did.* (*To himself.*) Trying, this. But never mind, I shall see Marjory in another minute!

MR. TID. (*to himself*). The *airs* these chaps give themselves! Oh, lor, there's Uncle Gabriel hooking on to him *again.* If he only knew!

[*He follows them up-stairs uneasily.*

SCENE X.

In the Drawing-room; GWENDOLEN *is still whispering in* MRS. GILWATTLE'S *ear.*

MRS. GIL. Eh? You're tickling my ear, child—don't come so close. Louder. Yes, go on. "Sat next to him at dessert"? *Well,* what *about* him? . . . *What?* . . . What's the child talking about now? . . . "A gentleman out of Blankley's shop"!! "Hired for the

evening"!!! Let her alone, Maria. *I* know who's telling the truth! So *this* is your precious nobleman, is it? Oh, the *deceit* of it all!

[*The door opens, and* UNCLE GABRIEL *enters, clinging affectionately to* LORD STRATHSPORRAN'S *arm.*

UNCLE GAB. And when I take a fancy to a young fellow, my lord, I don't allow any social prejudices to stand in the way. I should say just the same if you were a mere nobody. We ought to see *more* of one another. I should esteem it a distinguished favour if you'd honour me and my wife by dropping in to a little dinner some evening; no ceremony; just a few quiet pleasant people like ourselves. We'll see if we can't fix a day with my wife.

[*He steers him across to* MRS. GILWATTLE.

LORD STRATH. (*to himself*). Now, how the deuce am I going to get out of *this?* And what have they done with Marjory?

UNCLE GAB. Joanna, my love, I've been telling his lordship here how delighted and honoured we should be to see him at dinner some——

[MRS. GILWATTLE *rises slowly, bristling with indignation, and glares speechlessly at the unconscious* LORD STRATHSPORRAN, *while* MRS. TIDMARSH *vainly attempts to appease her, as her husband and the other men enter. Tableau.*

SCENE XI.

MRS. GILWATTLE *is still unable to express her feelings by more than a contemptuous stare.*

UNCLE GABRIEL. My—ah—love, you didn't hear me. I was saying I've almost prevailed on his lordship——

MRS. GILWATTLE (*becoming articulate*). His lordship, indeed! If *that's* a lord, I don't wonder you're such a Radical!

UNCLE GAB. Why—why—what's *come* to you, Joanna? My lord, I hope you'll excuse her—she's a little——

MRS. GIL. Fiddlesticks! You've been made a fool of, Gabriel! Can't you see for yourself that he's neither the manners nor yet the appearance of a *real* nobleman—or anything but what he *is?*

[*The piano stops suddenly.*

MRS. GILWATTLE RISES SLOWLY, BRISTLING WITH INDIGNATION.

UNCLE GAB. (*dropping* LORD S.'S *arm*). Eh? If you're not a lord, sir, what else *are* you?

LORD STRATH. (*wavering between wrath and amusement*). Afraid I can't enlighten you—I'm extremely curious to know, myself.

MRS. TID. (*distractedly*). Oh, aunt, it wasn't my fault, really! Montague *would* have him! And—and we *sent* round to say he wouldn't be required—we did indeed! Please, *please* don't tell anybody!

MRS. GIL. (*rigidly*). It is my *duty* to let every one here know how *disgracefully* we have been insulted to-night, Maria, and might have gone away in ignorance to the last, but for that innocent child—who has done nothing, that *I* can see, to deserve being shaken like that! *I*'m not going to sit by in silence and see a man passed off as a lord who is nothing more nor less than one of the assistants out of Blankley's shop, hired to come and fill a vacant place! Yes, Gabriel, if you doubt my word, look at Maria—and *now* ask that young man to dine!

[*Profound sensation among the company.*

UNCLE GAB. I—ah—withdraw the invitation, of course—it is cancelled, sir, cancelled!

FEMININE MURMUR. I had a feeling, the moment he came in, as if—so thankful now I didn't commit myself by so much as—ah, my dear, it all comes from a desire to make a show! (*&c., &c.*).

UNCLE GAB. It's the barefaced impudence of coming here on false pretences, that *I* can't get over. Come, Mr. Shopwalker, Counter-jumper, or whatever you really are, what have *you* got to say for yourself?

LORD STRATH. Say? Why——

[*He struggles to control his countenance for a moment, until he is convulsed at last by irrepressible laughter.*

ALL (*except the* TIDMARSHES). He's laughing—positively *laughing* at Us! The brazenness of it!

LORD STRATH. (*regaining composure*). I—I'm awfully sorry, but it struck me suddenly as so—— After all, the joke is only against myself. (*To himself.*) Must try and get my unfortunate hostess out of this fix—not that she deserves it! (*Aloud.*) If you will kindly let me explain, I think I can——

MR. TID. (*sullenly*). Oh, hang explaining! It's all out now, and you'd better leave it there!

LORD STRATH. I can't, indeed. I must make you all understand that this well-meaning lady with the highly-developed sense of duty has done our host and hostess a grave injustice, besides paying me a compliment I don't deserve. I'm sorry to say I can't claim to be half as useful a member of the community as any of the very obliging and attentive gentlemen in Mr. Blankley's employment. If I'm anything I'm a—an Egyptologist, in an amateur sort of way, you know. A—in fact, I'm writing a book on Ancient Egypt.

THE OTHERS. A *literary* man! As if *that* made it any better.

LORD STRATH. I merely mention it because it led me to write to Mr. Cartouche—whom I happened to hear of as a famous collector—and ask to be allowed to call and inspect his collection. Mr. Cartouche (who lives, I believe, at No. 92, next door) very kindly wrote, giving me leave, and inviting me to dine at the same time, and—I know it was unpardonably careless of me—but somehow I came here instead, and, Mr. and Mrs. Tidmarsh being both too—a—hospitable to undeceive me, I never found my mistake out till too late to put it right, without inconveniencing everybody. That's really all. [*Uneasy reaction in the company.*

UNCLE GAB. (*pompously*). Ha—hum—no doubt that puts a somewhat different complexion on the case, but it doesn't explain your conduct in calling yourself Lord Strathfoozleum, or whatever it was.

LORD STRATH. I think you mean Strathsporran. I did call myself that, because it happens to be my name.

MRS. TID. (*passionately*). I don't believe it . . . . I *can't*. If it is, why did Miss Seaton call you "Mr. Claypole"?

LORD STRATH. I beg your pardon—Claymore. Because, when we last met, I was Douglas Claymore, with no prospect whatever, as it seemed then, of being anything else.

MRS. TID. (*faintly*). Then he really is—*Oh!*

[*She sinks on the couch, crushed.*

UNCLE GAB. Ha, well, my lord, I'm glad this little misunderstanding is so satisfactorily cleared up, and if I may venture to hope for the honour of your company—shall we say Friday wee——(LORD S. *looks at him*

steadily.) Oh, if your lordship has some better engagement, well and good. Makes no difference to *me*, I assure you. Joanna, our carriage must be here by now, say good-bye and have done with it. Good-night, Maria, I'll see you don't expose me to *this* again!

SCENE XII.

The guests have all taken leave with extremely frosty farewells. MR. TIDMARSH *is down-stairs superintending their departure.* GWENNIE *has been pardoned on* LORD S.'S *intercession, and dismissed, in much bewilderment, to bed.* MRS. TIDMARSH *and* LORD STRATHSPORRAN *are alone.*

MRS. TID. (*hysterically*). Oh, Lord Strathsporran, when I think how I—— What can I *ever* say to you?

LORD STRATH. Only, I hope, that you forgive my stupidity in blundering in here as I did, Mrs. Tidmarsh.

MRS. TID. (*resuming the offensive*). It *was* a good deal your fault. If you had only said who you really were—if my husband had not been idiot enough to misunderstand—if Miss Seaton had been more straightforward, all this would never——!

LORD STRATH. We were all the victims of circumstances, weren't we? But I, at least, have no reason to regret it. And, if I may ask one last indulgence, will you—a—let me have an opportunity of saying good-bye to Miss Seaton?

MRS. TID. She, she doesn't *deserve*—Oh, I don't know *what* I'm saying. Of *course*, Lord Strathsporran, anything, *anything* I can do to—— I will send her down to you, if you will only wait. She shall not keep you long!

LORD STRATH. (*alone, to himself*). It's an ill wind, &c. I shall have Marjory all to myself, now! To think that—but for a lucky blunder—I should be spelling out scarabs and things on the wrong side of that wall at this moment, and never dreaming that Marjory was so—— Ah, she's coming! (MISS SEATON *enters, looking pale and disconsolate.*) Marjory, you've no idea what you've missed! I *must* tell you—it's too good to lose. What *do* you think all these good people have been taking me

for? You'll never guess! They actually believed I was hired from Blankley's? Give you my word they did! . . . . Why don't you *laugh*, Marjory?

MISS SEATON (*faintly*). I—I *am* laughing. No, Douglas, I'm not. I can't; I haven't the conscience to. Oh, I never meant you to know—but I must tell you, whatever comes of it! *I* believed it too, at first. (*Tragically.*) I *did*, Douglas!

LORD STRATH. *Did* you though, Marjory? Then, by Jove, I *must* have looked the character!

MISS SEATON (*timidly*). I knew you—you weren't very well off, Douglas, and so I fancied you might—— Oh, I know it was hateful of me ever to think such a thing, but I did. And you can never *really* forgive me!

LORD STRATH. Couldn't think of it! Shall I tell you something else, Marjory? I've a strong impression that you will not be an inmate of this happy English household *much* longer.

MISS SEATON. I'm *sure* I shan't, from Mrs. Tidmarsh's expression just now. But I don't care!

LORD STRATH. Don't be reckless. How do you know there isn't a moral lion about? And where will you go next, Marjory?

MISS SEATON (*with a shrug*). I don't know. I suppose to anybody who wants a governess, and doesn't mind taking her without a reference, if there *is* such a person!

LORD STRATH. Well, oddly enough, I fancy I know somebody who has been trying for a long time to find a young person of just your age and appearance, and might be induced to waive a reference after a personal interview. (MISS SEATON *looks incredulous.*) . . . Marjory, don't you understand? If I hadn't been such a pauper, I'd have spoken long ago, when we were up in Scotland together, only it didn't seem fair then. I—I dare say I've no better chance now; but, at least, I've more right to speak than I had, and—and—will you have me, Marjory? (*She turns away.*) I—I won't worry you, dear, if you really can't care about me in that way; but—but if you only *could*, Marjory, even a little!

MISS SEATON. *Douglas!* . . .

"DOUGLAS!"

Same Scene—somewhat later.

LORD STRATH. Not yet, Marjory—I can't let you go just yet! . . . Must I, really? Before I've said half what I wanted! . . . Well—in one minute, then. And you're coming to my people as soon as you can get out of this, Marjory; and I shall see you every day, till—till we shall never be separated any—— Confound it!—who's that?

[MR. TIDMARSH *enters suddenly.*

MR. TID. Oh—er—Lord Strathsporran, sorry to interrupt you, but—hem—my wife, who's feeling too unwell to come down again, desires me to say that, in her opinion, Miss Seaton has been here quite long enough.

[MISS SEATON *escapes by the back drawing-room.*

LORD STRATH. I entirely agree with Mrs. Tidmarsh; but I am happy to say that Miss Seaton will not remain here very much longer, as she has just done me the honour of consenting to be my wife. Good-night, sir, and many thanks for a most—a—eventful evening.

[*He goes out.*

MR. TID. (*making an effort to escort him down-stairs, but giving it up, and sitting down heavily on a settee instead*). She'll be Lady Strathsporran! And I shall have to break it to Maria—after she's just gone in and stuck a month's salary and immediate notice on her pincushion! Oh, lor—as if my poor wife hadn't trouble enough to bear as it was!

END OF 'THE MAN FROM BLANKLEY'S.'

ONE SIDE OF THE CANVASS.

(AN ELECTIONEERING REMINISCENCE.)

SCENE—*A narrow South London Street of two-storeyed houses, with a Rag-and-Bone Shop at one end and a Public-House at the other. Time, about four o'clock on a warm Saturday afternoon. Enter* MR. CARLTON-JERMYN, *a middle-aged gentleman, in faultless get-up, who, in a moment of weakness, has undertaken to canvass the district for his friend, the Conservative Candidate.*

MR. C.-J. (*to himself, as he regards his surroundings with dismay, and tries to arrange his canvassing-cards*). I suppose this *is* Little Anna Maria Street? I didn't understand at the Committee Rooms that it was *quite* such a—however, I must do my best for dear old Tilney. Who's the first man I must see and "use my best endeavours to persuade him into promising his vote"? Ah, Mr. J. Splurge, No. 1. (*He picks his way delicately along, attempting to make out the numbers on the doors, which are all thrown back; female residents watch him from doorsteps and windows with amused interest.*) No. 5; No. 3; the next is No. 1. (*It is; but the entrance is blocked by a small infant with a very dirty face, who is slung in a baby-chair between the door-posts.*) Very embarrassing, really! Can't ask such a child as this if Mr. Splurge is at home! I'll knock. (*Stretches for the knocker across the child, who, misinterpreting his intentions, sets up a howl.*) My good child, I assure you . . . for Heaven's sake, don't! . . I—I wonder whether I ought to *kiss* it—some fellows would!

FEMALE VOICE (*from side-window*). You leave that pore child alone, will yer?—or I'll come out and *tork* to you, d' y' 'ear?

MR. C.-J. (*to himself*). That's *Mrs.* Splurge! I think, perhaps, I'd better *not* wait. (*With an inspiration.*) I'll leave a card. (*Drops one of his visiting-cards in the child's lap—to its exceeding terror—and*

"I WONDER WHETHER I OUGHT TO *kiss* IT—SOME FELLOWS WOULD!"

retreats.) I'm *afraid* I haven't produced a very favourable impression, so far. I'll try No. 2, across the street. (*He approaches a doorstep upon which two stout and dishevelled women are seated.*) Er—I *beg* your

pardon, but could you kindly inform me if Mr.—er—(*consulting card*)—Guffin is at home?

FIRST WOMAN (*with sarcasm*). Now *do* yer think he's nothink else to do but set indoors in a arm-cheer all day?

MR. C.-J. I—I thought—I hoped—that, it being Saturday, I might be—er—fortunate enough—have I the pleasure of addressing Mrs. Guffin? [*Both women are convulsed with uncontrollable mirth.*

SECOND WOMAN (*on recovering—calling down the passage*). 'Ere, Mrs. Guffin, yer wanted. 'Ere's a gentleman come to see yer!

MRS. GUFFIN (*appearing from the basement, and standing at the further end of the passage*). Well, what does *he* want?

MR. C.-J. (*raising his hat, and sending his voice down the passage to her*). I ventured to call, Mrs. Guffin, in the hope of finding your husband at home, and ascertaining his—er—political sympathies—in view of the Election.

MRS. GUFFIN. Oh, it's about the voting, is it? Are you for a Conservatory?

MR. C.-J. For a—? Oh, to be sure, yes. I came to ask Mr. Guffin to support Sir Tilney Bruton, the Conservative Candidate. Perhaps if I called again, I might——?

MRS. GUFFIN (*in a matter-of-fact tone*). I don't expect my 'usband 'ome till late, and then he'll be drunk.

MR. C.-J. Just so. But I trust, Mrs. Guffin, your husband feels the importance of maintaining the Union——?

MRS. GUFFIN. He *did* belong, I know, but I think his branch broke up, or somethink.

MR. C.-J. (*puzzled*). Ah, but I mean in—er—politics—I hope he is opposed to granting Home Rule to Ireland?

MRS. G. He don't tell *me* nothing about his politics, but I've 'eard him say he was Radikil.

MR. C.-J. (*diplomatically, as* MRS. G. *slowly edges towards the door*). Might I suggest, Mrs. Guffin, that you should use the—er—influence which every woman possesses, to—er—induce your husband—(*here he suddenly becomes aware that* MRS. GUFFIN *has a very pronounced black eye*); but perhaps I ought not to ask you.

MRS. G. Well, *my* opinion is—if you want some one to tork over my 'usband to your side, you'd better come and do it yourself; because *I* ain't goin' to. So there! [*She retires to the basement again.*

FIRST DISH. W. If you toffs can't do nothink better than come 'ere makin' mischief between a man and his wife, you'd better stop at 'ome, *that* you 'ad?

MR. C.-J. (*to himself*). Upon my word, I believe she's right! But I never noticed the poor woman's eye before. I wish I could find one of the *men* in, and have a talk with him—much more satisfactory! (*Knocks at No.* 4.) Is Mr. Bulcher at home?

MR. B. (*lurching out of a room on the ground-floor*). Qui' c'rect, guv'nor—thash me!

MR. C.-J. I wanted to see you, Mr. Bulcher, to ask if we may count upon your support for the Conservative Candidate at the Election. I need hardly point out to you the—er—vital importance of——

MR. B. (*slouching against the passage-wall, opposite* MR. C.-J.). 'Old on, guv'nor, lemme ashk you thish question, 'fore we go any furrer. Wharriwanter 'ear from *you* is—'Ow'm I goin' git little bit o' good outer thesh 'lections for myshelf. You unnershtand me? What good Conshervative gov'men' ever done er workin' man—d'yer shee? Why, never—not in all their born daysh! You take that shtraight from me.

MR. C.-J. But surely—er—it was a Conservative Government that gave you Free Education?

MR. B. (*knowingly*). No, it washn't, guv'nor. There yer wrong, d'yer see? It wash er *Radicals* give us Free Education. And whatsh Free Education er me? Wouldn' say Thank yer f'rall Free Education in er wide world!

MR. C.-J. (*recognizing that he must strike a stronger chord*). Well, at all events you will admit that, during the last six years, you have been—er—peaceful and prosperous?

MR. B. (*beerily*). I've been peashful and proshperous ever shinsh I was born. No, look 'ere, guv'n'r, I'm torken to you 'bout wharri *unnershtan'*, d'yer see? Jes' you lishen er wharri'm goin tell you. (*Here he punctuates his remarks by poking* MR. C.-J.'S *ribs with a clay pipe.*)

Workin' man's gettin' more and more 'telligent every day—he'sh qui' capable lookin' after his own interests. What he wantsh is, One Man One Vote, Redooced Hours o' Labour, 'Ome Rule for London, an' the Control of the Liquor Traffic! What did Misher Glashtone say? Educated and 'telligent clashes alwaysh *wrong*—mashes always *ri'!* An' hain't *I* 'telligent an' educated? Very *well*, then. There you *'ave* it.

MR. C.-J. But—er—don't you see, my friend, that, according to Mr. Gladstone, the more intelligent and educated you are, the more you're likely to be wrong?

MR. B. Nothing of—er—kind. Don' you make any mishtake. *I* ain't wrong. I gommy 'pinions—my p'litical 'pinions, and the prinshiples I go 'pon are—Down with—er—Tories!

MR. C.-J. In that case, Mr. Bulcher, I need not occupy your time any longer, so I'll say——

MR. B. (*buttonholing him*). Don' you go 'way, guv'nor, 'fore I've finished torkin. I've lishened all *you* gorrer say—now itsh *my* turn talk, and I tell *you* er Conshervative Gov'men ish a downri' (*&c., &c.*).

MR. C.-J. (*escaping, after ten minutes' incoherence*). I'm afraid he was not *quite* in a condition to be argued with, but perhaps I shall do better with Mr. Moleskin, next door. (*To a small boy in passage.*) Mr. Moleskin in, my lad?

THE BOY. Father—*e's* in. Go right up the stairs, and you'll find 'im.

MR. C.-J. *flounders up the narrow stairs, and is met at the top by a very burly and surly mechanic.*

MR. MOLESKIN. Now, then, what do *you* want 'ere? (MR. C.-J. *explains his object, in some confusion*). Oh, that's it, is it? And what right ha' you got comin' up my stairs as if they belonged to you? Jest you tell me that!

MR. C.-J. (*meekly*). I'm really very sorry—but I was—er—*shown* up.

MR. M. It's 'igh time you and the likes o' you *were* shown up, in my opinion. 'Ow would you like to 'ave me comin' bustin' up *your* stairs, eh?

MR. C.-J. (*thinking that he wouldn't like it at all*). I assure you I quite feel that this is an unwarrantable intrusion on my part—I must ask you to accept my best apologies—but I should be very glad to know that we might count on your—er—support at such a national crisis.

MR. M. I dessay yer would. But what I ask *you* is—where does the secrecy of the Ballot come in, if I'm to tell you which way I'm goin' to give my vote?

MR. C.-J. (*in distress*). Pray believe that I should not dream of—er forcing any confidence from you, or dictating to you in any way! I merely——

MR. M. (*mollified*). Well, I don't mind tellin' yer this much:—I've made up *my* mind long ago, and, when the time comes, I shall vote to please myself and nobody else; and that's as much as you've got any right to know!

MR. C.-J. (*with a feeling that he would give much the same answer himself under similar circumstances*). Then I'm afraid it would be of no use if I said any more?

MR. M. Not a bit o' use, [*He goes into his room again.*

MRS. MOLESKIN (*coming out and addressing her son from landing*). 'Ere, Jimmy, you come in orf o' that doorstep, and don't you go showin' any *more* folks up, or you don't know *wo'* you may let in next!

MR. C.-J. (*sadly to himself, as he descends*). I'd no idea canvassing was such exhausting work. I—I really think I've done enough for one afternoon! [*Leaves Little Anna Maria Street—for ever!*

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CANVASS.

(A PURELY IMAGINARY SKETCH.)

SCENE—*A Portico in Portman Square.* MR. BENJAMIN GULCHER (*an ardent Radical Artisan, canvassing the district on behalf of a "pal" of his, who is putting up as a Labour Candidate*), *discovered on the doorstep.*

MR. GULCHER (*to himself—after knocking*). Some might think it was on'y waste of time me callin' at a swell 'ouse o' this sort—but them as lives in the 'ighest style is orfen the biggest demmycrats. Yer *never* know! Or p'raps this Sir Norman Naseby ain't made his mind up yet, and I can tork him over to *our* way o' thinking. (*The doors are suddenly flung open by two young men in a very plain and sombre livery.*) Two o' the *young* 'uns, I s'pose. (*Aloud.*) 'Ow *are* yer? Father in, d'yer know?

FIRST FOOTMAN (*loftily*). I don't know anything about your father, I'm sure. Better go down the airey-steps and inquire there.

MR. G. (*annoyed with himself*). It's my mistake. I didn't see yer were on'y flunkeys at first. It's yer guv'nor *I* want—the ole man!

FIRST FOOTMAN (*with cold dignity*). If you are illewding to Sir Norman, he is not at home.

MR. G. (*indignantly*). 'Ow can yer tell me sech a falsehood, when I can see him myself, a-dodgin' about down there in the passage! (*Forces his way past the astonished men into the hall, and addresses a stately* BUTLER *in plain clothes.*) 'Ere, Sir Naseby, I've come in to 'ave a little tork with you on the quiet like.

THE BUTLER (*not displeased*). I don't happen to be Sir Norman himself, my good fellow. Sir Norman is out.

MR. G. Out, is he? *that's* a pity! I wanted to see him on important business. But look 'ere—p'raps his missus is in—*She'll* do! (*To himself.*) I gen'ally git along with the wimmin-folk—*some* 'ow!

THE BUTLER. I can't say if her ladyship is at home. If you like to send up your name, I'll inquire.

MR. G. You tell her Mr. Benjamin Gulcher is 'ere, if she'll step down a minnit. She needn't *'urry*, yer know, if she's 'aving her dinner or cleanin' herself. (*To himself, as the* BUTLER *departs noiselessly.*) Civil-spoken party that—one o' the lodgers, seemin'ly. Roomy sort o' crib this 'ere. Wonder what they pay a week for it!

BUTLER (*returning*). Her ladyship will see you, if you will step this way.

[MR. G. *is taken up a staircase, and ushered into the presence of* LADY NASEBY, *who is seated at her writing-table.*

LADY N. (*still writing*). One moment, please. My husband is out just now—but if you will kindly state the nature of your business with him, I dare say I could—— (*She looks up.*) Good Heavens! What could have possessed Clarkson to show such a person as that in *here?* (*To herself.*)

MR. G. (*in his most ingratiating manner*). Well, mum, in the absence of his lordship, I am sure you'll prove a 'ighly agreerble substitoot!

LADY N. (*freezingly*). May I ask you to tell me—in two words—what it is you wish to see him about.

MR. G. *Certingly* you may, mum! It's like this 'ere. I want your good gentleman to promise me his vote and influence for Mr. Joe Quelch, as we're runnin' for a Labour Candidate this Election.

LADY N. I really cannot answer for my husband's views on political matters, Mr.—a—Squelcher; I make it a rule *never* to interfere.

MR. G. Jest what *my* old woman sez. I've learnt her not to argy with *me* on politics. But, yer see, a deal depends on the way a thing is *done*, and—(*insinuatingly*)—a good-lookin' woman like yourself—(LADY N. *gasps out a faint little "Oh!" here*)—oh, I'm on'y tellin' yer what yer know already—'ud find it easy enough to get her better 'alf to vote *her* way, if she chooses. You take him some evenin'—say a Saturday, now—when

he's jest 'ad enough to feel 'appy, and coax him into giving his vote to Quelch. *You* know 'ow to do it! And he's the *right* man, mind yer, Quelch is—the right *man!*

"*You* KNOW 'OW TO DO IT!"

LADY N. (*almost inaudibly*). How—how *dare* you come into my house, and offer me this impertinent advice! How——?

MR. G. (*good-temperedly*). Easy there, lady — no impertinence intended, I'm sure. I shouldn't come in 'ere, intrudin' on the sacred privacy of the British 'Ome, which I'm quite aware an Englishman's 'Ouse is his Castle—and rightly so—if I didn't feel privileged like. I'm *canvassing*, I am!

LADY N. You are taking a most unpardonable liberty, and, if you have the *slightest* sense of decency——

MR. G. (*imploringly*). Now look 'ere—don't let us 'ave a vulgar *row* over this! I ain't goin' to lose *my* temper. Strike—but 'ear me! If we don't think alike, there's no reason why you and me should fall out. I put that to *you*. It's likely enough you don't *know* Joe Quelch?

LADY N. (*with temper*). I never heard of the man in my life!

MR. G. (*triumphantly*). See there, now. That's where canvassing comes in, d'yer see? It's our honly way of combating the hignirance and hapathy of the Upper Classes. Well, I'll tell yer somethink *about* 'im. Quelch worked as a lighterman on a barge fourteen years for eighteen bob a week. Ain't *that* a Man of the People for yer? And if he gits into Parliament, he'll insist on Labour bein' served fust, he's in favour o' Shortened Hours of Labour, Taxation o' Ground Rents, One Man one Vote, Triannual Parliaments and Payment o' Members, Compulsory Allotments, Providin' Work by Gov'ment for the Unemployed, Abolition o' the 'Ouse o' Lords, and a Free Breakfast Table. Ah, and he means *'aving* it too. That's what Joe is. But look 'ere, why not come and 'ear what he's got to say for yerself? He's 'oldin' a small open-air meetin' in Kipper's Court this evenin', ar-past eight percisely. You come and bring yer 'usban', and I'll guarantee you git a good place close to the cheer. I'll interdooce yer to him arterwards, and he'll answer any questions yer like to arsk him—fair *and* straight!

LADY N. (*feebly*). Thank you very much; but—but we are unfortunately dining out this evening, so I'm *afraid*——

MR. G. (*more in sorrow than in anger*). There it *is*, yer see. Yer afraid. Afraid o' 'earing the truth. Carn't trust yerself to listen to both sides. But I don't despair of yer yet. See 'ere; is it 'Ome Rule that separates us? 'Cos, if so, it needn't. Quelch don't care no more for 'Ome

Rule than that 'ere penwiper do, between you and me! On'y, yer see, he carn't *say* so at present, d'yer ketch my meanin'? (LADY N. *rings the bell in despair.*) Oh, thankee, mum, if you *are* so kind, I'll take whatever yer goin' to 'ave yerself, *I* ain't partickler.

LADY N. (*as the* BUTLER *appears*). Clarkson, show this—this gentleman the way out.

MR. G. Don't you trouble, old pal, I can find it for myself. (*To* LADY N.) I believe, if the truth was known, you're comin' round already, mum. I'll tell yer what I'll do. I'll leave some o' these 'ere little pamphlicks, as you might get your good man to run his eye over. "*Why* I am a Radikil," "The Infamy of Tory Gov'ment," "'Ow we are Robbed!" &c. And 'ere's a picter-poster—"The 'Orrers of Coercion under the Brutal Balfour!" Yer might put it up in yer front winder—it don't *commit* yer to nothing, yer know!—it'll amuse the kids, if you've any family.

CLARKSON (*in his ear*). Will you walk down-stairs quietly, or shall I have to pitch you?

MR. G. (*roused at last*). What, I'm to cop the push, am I? An' what *for*, eh? What 'ave I done more than you swells ha' bin doin' ever since the Elections started? (*To* LADY N.) You come pokin' into *our* 'ouses, without waitin' to be invited, arskin' questions and soft-sawderin', and leavin' tracks and coloured picters—and we put up with it all. But as soon as one of *us* tries it on, what do yer do?—ring for the Chucker-out! Ah, and reason enough, too—yer know yer'll get beaten on the argyments! (*Here he is gently but firmly led out by* CLARKSON, *and concludes his observations on the stairs outside.*) Stuck-up, pudden'-'eaded fossils! . . . battenin' on the People's brains! . . your time 'll come some day! . . . Wait till Quelch 'ears o' this! (*&c., &c.*)

LADY N. (*alone*). Thank goodness he's gone!—but *what* an ordeal! I really *must* part with Clarkson. And—whatever the Primrose League Council may say—I shall have to tell them I *must* give up canvassing. I don't think I *can* do it any more—after this!

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THEMIS.

(A SKETCH IN THE NEW LAW COURTS IN ANTICIPATION OF THE VERY NEXT "CAUSE CÉLÈBRE" THAT MAY HAVE THE GOOD FORTUNE TO ENLIST THE SYMPATHIES OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC.)

SCENE—*A Corridor outside the Courts appropriated to the Common Law Division of the High Court of Justice. At each of the doors of the Court where the Great Trial of* ARKASS *v.* ARKASS AND AMBO—*which abounds in "scandalous revelations in High Life"—is proceeding, a group of would-be auditors has collected, waiting with the patience of respectable Peris for a chance of admission to the forensic Paradise within. The Paradise, at present, is full to overflowing, and the doors are guarded by a couple of particularly stern and stolid attendants. Each Peri is trying to wear out the endurance of the rest, and to propitiate the doorkeepers by exemplary behaviour.*

A MEEK MAN (*to* DOORKEEPER, *after standing in hopeful silence for three-quarters of an hour*). I suppose there'll be a chance of getting in presently, eh?

THE DOORKEEPER (*placidly*). None whatever, sir.

THE M. M. But they'll be rising for luncheon in an hour or so, and some will be coming out then, surely?

DOORK. Not many; them as *are* in stays in, mostly.

THE M. M. (*with a sudden recollection that he is acquainted with one of the Counsel engaged in the case*). Couldn't you take in my card to Mr. Tanfield? I'm sure he'll do anything he could for me.

[*The rest regard him with extreme disfavour, as one guilty of unsportsmanlike behaviour.*

DOORK. It won't be no use—there ain't room in there as it is for a billiard-cue—leastwise (*conscientiously*) a stoutish one—but I'll get it taken in for you, if you *like*.

[*He opens the door a very little, and passes the card to an attendant within.*

JUNIOR MEMBERS OF THE JUNIOR BAR (*in very clean white wigs, with hauteur*). Thought you had orders to let Counsel in before the general public? There *ought* to be some rule about that, if there isn't.

DOORK. So we do, sir; but if this gentleman's a friend of Mr. Tanfield's, and he *arsks* me to admit him, why you see——

THE JUNIOR JUNIOR (*witheringly*). The convenience of mere Members of the *Bar* must give way, naturally!

[*The inside attendant returns with card, which the* DOORKEEPER *unlocks the door to receive, and then shuts it with a sharp click, like a wild-beast tamer.*

DOORK. (*to the* M. M., *after perusing card by the dim light*). I *told* you it wouldn't be no use, sir. "Please wait," it says.

[*General movement of virtuous satisfaction at this well-merited rebuke.*

THE M. M. (*wishing he had not put his trust in* TANFIELD). I—I *have* waited—but it don't matter. (*Addressing* FIRST WHITE WIG, *from a timid social impulse.*) The—er—Plaintiff made some remarkable admissions in the box yesterday—his cross-examination seemed pretty severe.

FIRST WHITE WIG (*after a stare at his audacity*). Cross-examination not unfrequently *is*. (*To the other* W. W.) See that extraordinary decision of old Jubber's in *Biling* v. *Bulgin?* Of course they'll appeal!

[*The couple converse in highly technical terms for some minutes.*

THE M. M. (*at the next pause*). It struck me that Colonel Arkass rather contradicted himself on one or two points.

SECOND W. W. Very likely. (*To* FIRST W. W.) What do *you* do when you're before one of these confounded Common Law Judges,

and see he's looking up a point of Equity in a text-book during your argument? Do you wait for him?

FIRST W. W. (*with all the decision of a Counsel who was called the Term before last*). Wait for him? No—go on talking about anything you like, till he's ready to listen to you again. That's what *I* always do!

AN IMPORTANT STRANGER (*bustling up; to* DOORKEEPERS). Here, I say, let *me* in, will you?

DOORK. You a witness in this case, sir?

THE IMP. S. (*after a tell-tale pause*). Er—yes—in a sort of way, y' know.

DOORK. Then *your* entrance is down below, sir, in the Central 'All —you'll see it written up there.

THE I. S. Haw—well, I'm not *exactly* a witness, but I'm interested in the case, y' know.

DOORK. So are all these gentlemen, sir—but they can't get in.

THE I. S. No—but look *here*. I *know* the criminals—'t least I don't mean to call 'em *that*, y' know—hope they're all innocent, I'm sure. I like 'em all; *danced* with 'em, and all that, lots of times.

DOORK. Ah, well, you see they ain't dancin' to-day, sir. (*The* I. S. *bustles away; there is a stir within; the portion of the crowd in Court that is visible through the glass doors heaves convulsively, and presently produces a stout and struggling Q. C.*) Make way there! Stand aside, gentlemen, please. Counsel coming out!

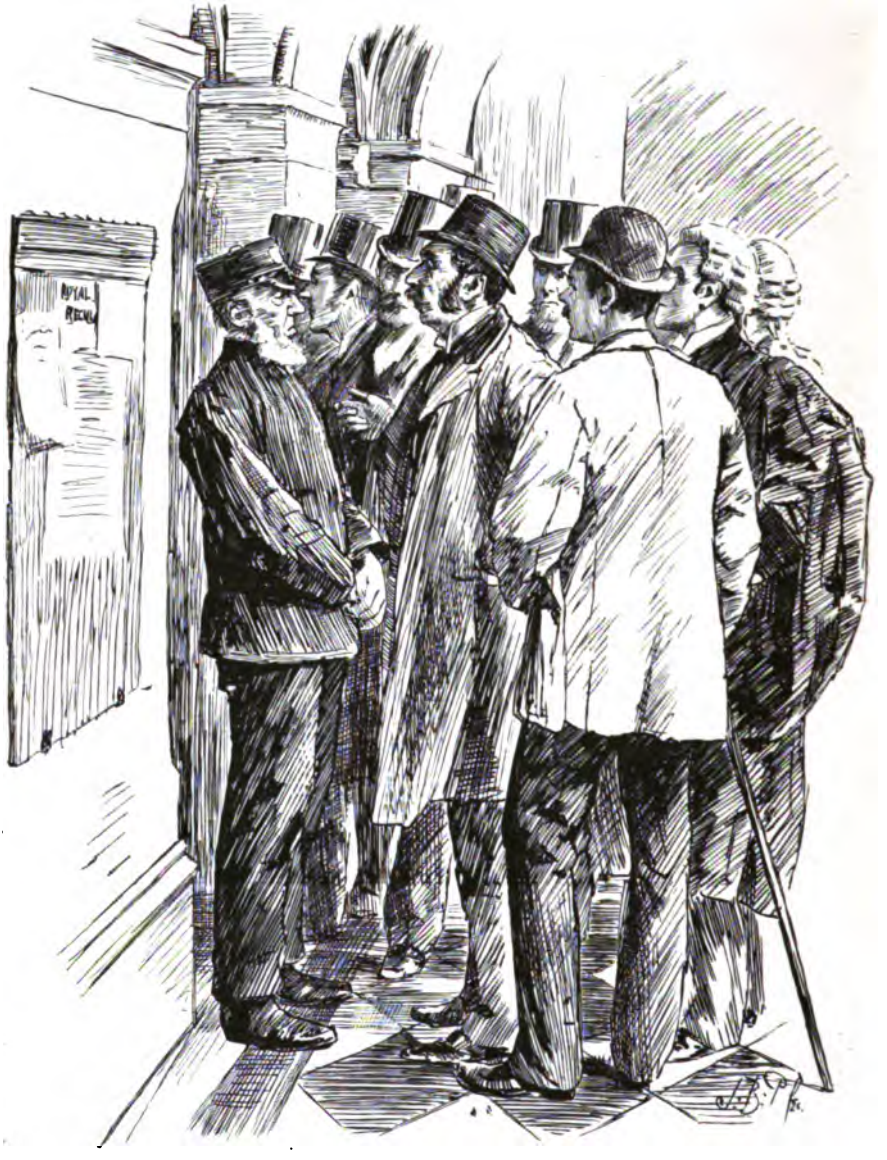
[Q. C. *comes out, puffing, followed by his Clerk and a Client.*

FIRST W. W. (*as the chasm in the crowd closes again*). *Now* you can let us in!

DOORK. (*stolidly*). Not yet, sir. (*To other* DOORK.) I see that party agen last night—*you* know—him as was here making all that shindy day afore yesterday. I went and 'ad a drink with 'im.

SECOND DOORK. (*interested*). Ah, and 'ow *was* he?

FIRST DOORK. Oh, same as usual—boozed. Told me he'd come up from Glasgow for a week's spree—and he seems to be *'aving* it, too. Going 'ome Saturday, so he sez.



"NO—BUT LOOK *here*. I *know* THE CRIMINALS!"

SECOND DOORK. (*grimly*). He'll be lucky if he gets there Saturday fortnight!

MURMURS (*from the fortunate Peris who can just see the witness-box through the glass panel*). Who's that in the box? That's Colonel Arkass—finishing his cross-examination . . . Doesn't seem to be enjoying himself . . . See how he's tugging at his moustache . . . Got a nasty one just then, I expect . . . I'd as soon believe 'im as I would 'er —*now* . . . She ain't been in the *box* yet . . . No, but she's a reg'lar bad lot, from what was said in the opening speech. They won't change my opinion of *'er*, whichever way the case goes! Well, I 'aven't followed it closely myself . . . Oh, no more have I—but still I've made up *my* mind long ago about it (*&c.*, *&c.*).

THE I. S. (*suddenly returning, indignant*). I say, they're letting in all *sorts* of people—barristers, and so on—at that *other* door!

DOORK. Can't 'elp that, sir; *this* ain't the other door—you should speak to *them* about it!

THE I. S. (*naïvely*). Well, I *have*—and they told me to come here!

[*General snigger, amidst which he departs in disgust.*

A SMALL OFFICE BOY (*with a strip of paper, tied with red tape*). Kin I see Sir Halfrid Allabye a moment?

DOORK. Sir Alfred ain't in this Court—he's engaged in another case.

THE O. B. 'Is clurk 'll do—it's 'ighly important—you better lemme *in*, I tell yer!

DOORK. Send in a message for yer, if that'll do. (*The* O. B. *says it doesn't signify, and bolts.*) Young Artful! thinks he'll sneak in, and spend his dinner-hour there—but he *don't!*

THE M. M. (*who has been examining his card under a gaslight*). I say, I've just found out that it wasn't "Please *wait*" that Mr. Tanfield wrote on my card—it's "Please *Admit!*" [*A general titter of incredulity.*

FIRST W. W. (*to* SECOND W. W.). Ingenious—but a trifle transparent that, eh? [*His friend smiles knowingly.*

THE M. M. (*roused*). Do you mean to suggest that I— [*He chokes.*

FIRST W. W. Oh, not at all—I was speaking to my friend here.

But you really must allow that, if any preference is shown at all, it should be given—equitably, and of right—to Members of the Bar!

CHORUS, FROM THE OTHER PERIS. Yes, they've stood here nearly as long as you have. You must wait your turn, like the rest of us! No preferences *'ere!* We've got as much right to go in as you . . . If Mr. Tanfield wants you admitted over our heads, let him come and let you in himself! If *any* one goes in first, it ought to be Barristers! (*&c., &c.*) . . . . . .

DOORK. (*impartially*). Well, it ain't o' much consequence, gentlemen, for I can't let *none* of you in at present!

[*The* M. M. *simmers with suppressed rage; wonders if it is worth while to mention that he happens to be a Barrister himself, and wishes to enter for the serious and legitimate purpose of collecting material for an Essay he is contributing on "The Abuse of Cross-Examination" to the "Nineteenth Century." On reflection, he thinks he had better not.*

DOORK. (*as the crowd in Court is again convulsed*). Clear the way there! Court rising—Counsel coming out! Ah, this *is* Mr. Tanfield.

THE PERIS (WHITE WIGS *and all*). Now we shall *see!*

[*They regard the* M. M. *with anticipatory triumph.*

MR. TANFIELD (*passing out and recognizing the* M. M.). Why, my dear Mutton, won't they let you in? Here, come along with me.

[*He passes his arm through the* M. M.'s, *walks with him to the other door, murmurs a request for his admission, and the next moment the* M. M. *is safe in the haven of his desire.*

THE OTHER PERIS (*looking after him enviously*). Well, of all the brazen impudence!

[*They are swept aside by the current of emerging Counsel, Spectators, &c., and re-assemble, to find the doors as pitilessly closed against them as ever. The* WHITE WIGS *threaten to write to the "Law Times" on the subject, and are regarded with admiration by the rest as Champions of Popular Rights.*

BOAT-RACE DAY.

The READER *will kindly imagine that he has crossed Hammersmith Bridge, and is being carried along by a jostling stream of sightseers towards Mortlake. The banks are already occupied—although it still wants half-an-hour to the time fixed for the start—by a triple row of the more patient and prudent spectators. On the left of the path, various more or less* SHADY CHARACTERS *have established their "pitches," and are doing their best to beguile the unsophisticated.*

FIRST SHADY CHARACTER (*presiding over a parti-coloured roulette board with a revolving and not unmanageable index*). Three to one any colour you like! Fairest game in the world! I'm a backin', I'm a layin' . . . Pop it on, you sportsmen! (*Two* SPORTSMEN—*a couple of shop-boys—*"*pop it on*," *in coppers.*) Yaller was your colour—and it *is* a yaller cap, sure enough! *I*'m a payin' this time. Try it again! (*They do.*) Blue's your fancy this turn, my lord. And green it *is!* Good ole Hireland for ever! Twenty can play at this game as well as one! Don't be afraid o' yer luck—'ave another go. *Red* did you put your coppers on? And it's *yaller* again—and *you* lose! (*The* SPORTSMEN *pass on—with empty pockets.*) Fairest game in the world!

SECOND S. C. (*who has been conducting a Confidence Auction from a barrow and egg-box*). Well, I 'ope you're all satisfied, and if you ain't—(*candidly*)—it don't make no bloomin' difference to me, for I'm orf—these premises is comin' down fur alterations.

[*He gets off the barrow, shoulders the egg-box, and departs in search of fresh dupes.*

A VENDOR. Now all you who are fond of a bit o' fun and amusement, jest you stop and invest a penny in this little article I am now about

to introdooce to your notice, warranted to make yer proficient in the 'ole art and practice of Photography in the small space of five seconds and a arf—and I think you'll agree with me as it ain't possible to become an expert photographer at a smaller expense than the sum of one penny. 'Ere I 'old in my 'and a simple little machine, consistin' of a small sheet of glorss in a gilt frame. I've been vaccinated five 'underd-and-forty-one times, never been bit by a mad dog in my life, and all these articles have been thoroughly fumigated before leaving the factory, therefore you'll agree with me you needn't be afraid o' catching the inflooenza. They tell me it's nearly died out now—and no wonder, with everythink a cure for it —but this article is a *certain* remedy. All you've got to do is to bite off a corner of the glorss, takin' care to be near a public 'ouse at the time, chew the glorss into small fragments, enter the public 'ouse, call for a pot o' four ale, and drink it orf quick. It operates in this way—the minoot portions of the glorss git between the jaws of the microbe, preventin' 'im from closin' 'is mouth, and thereby enablin' you to suffocate 'im with the four ale. (*To the* READER.) Will you allow me to show how this little invention takes a photograph, sir? Kindly 'old it in your 'and, breathe on it, and look steadily on the plate for the space of a few seconds. (*All of which the* READER, *being the soul of courtesy, obligingly does—and is immediately rewarded by observing the outline of a donkey's head produced upon the glass.*) Now if you'll 'and that round, Sir, to allow the company to judge whether it ain't a correct likeness——

[*But here the* READER *will probably prefer to pass on.*

THIRD S. C. (*who is crouching on ground by a tin case, half covered with a rug, and yelling*). Ow-ow-ow-ow! . . . Come an' see the wonderful little popsy-wopsy Marmoseet, what kin tork five lengwidges, walk round, shake 'ands, tell yer 'is buthday, 'is percise age, and where he was keptured!

[*Crowd collects to inspect this zoological phenomenon, which—as soon as an inconvenient Constable is out of hearing—reveals itself as an illicit lottery. Speculators purchase numbered tickets freely; balls are shaken up in the tin box—and the popsy-wopsy invariably gets distinctly the best of it.*

FOURTH S. C. (*an extremely disreputable-looking old gentleman, with a cunningly curled piece of tape on a board*). 'Ere, I'm ole Billy Fairplay, *I* am! Come an' try yer fortins at little 'Ide an' Find! Arf-a-crown yer

"I'M OLE BILLY FAIRPLAY, I AM!"

don't prick the middle o' this bit o' tape. Bet arf-a-crown, to win five shillings! (*A* SCHOOL-BOY *sees his way to doubling his last tip, and speculates.*) Wrong agin, my boy! It's old Billy Fairplay's luck—for *once* in a way!

[*The* SCHOOL-BOY *departs, saddened by this most unexpected result.*

FIFTH S. C. (*a fat, fair man, with an impudent frog-face, who is trying desperately hard to take in a sceptical crowd with the too familiar purse trick*). Now look 'ere, I don't mind tellin' yer all, fair *an'* frank, I'm 'ere to get a bit, if I *can;* but, if you kin ketch me on my *merits*, why, *I* shan't grumble—I'll promise yer that much! Well, now—(*to a stolid and respectable young* CLERK)—jest to show you don't know *me*, and I don't know *you*—(*he throws three half-crowns into the purse*). There, 'old *that* for me. Shut it. (*The* CLERK *does so, grinning.*) Thank you—you're a gentleman, though you mayn't look like it—but perhaps you're one in disguise. *Now* gimme 'arf-a-crown for it. Yer won't? *Any* one gimme arf-a-crown for it? Why—(*unprintable language*)—if ever I see sech a blanky lot o' mugs in *my* life! 'Ere, I'll try yer once more! (*He does.*) *Now* oo'll gimme arf-a-crown for it? (*To a* GENTEEL ONLOOKER, *with an eyeglass, who has made an audible comment.*) "See 'ow it's done!" So yer orter, with a glazier's shop where yer eye orter be! Well, if any one had a told me I should stand 'ere, on Boat-Race Day too, orferin' six bob for arf-a-crown, and no one with the ordinary pluck an' straightforwardness to take me at my word, I'd have suspected that man of tellin' me an untruth! (*To a* SIMPLE-LOOKING SPECTATOR.) Will *you* 'old this purse for me? Yer will? Well, I like the manly way yer speak up! (*Here the* GENT. ONL., *observing a seedy man slinking about outside, warns the company to "mind their pockets"—which excites the* PURSE-SELLER'S *just indignation.*) "Ere!—(*to the* G. O.) you take *your* 'ook! I've 'ad enough o' you, I 'ave. You're a bloomin' sight too officious, *you* are! Not much in *your* pockets to mind—'cept the key o' the street, and a ticket o' leave, I'll lay! If you carn't beyave as a Gentleman *among* Gentlemen, go 'ome to where you 'ad your 'air cut last—to Pentonville! (*The* G. O. *retires.*) There, we shall get along better without *'im.* 'Ow long are you goin' to keep me 'ere? Upon my word an' honour, it's enough to sicken a man to see what the world's come to! Where's yer courage? Where's yer own common sense? Where's your faith in 'umin nature? What do yer *expect?* (*Scathingly.*) Want me to wrop it up in a porcel, and send it 'ome for yer? Is *that* what yer waitin' for? Dammy, if this goes on, I shall git wild, and take and give the bloomin' purse a bath! (*The* SIMPLE

SPECTATOR *feels in his pockets—evidently for a half-crown.*) 'Ere, *you* look more intelligent than the rest—I'll try yer jest this once. Jest to show yer don't know me, and—— (*Shouts of "They're off! They're coming!" from the bank; the* PURSE-SELLER'S *audience suddenly melts away, leaving him alone with the* SEEDY SLINKER.) 'Ere, Jim, we may as well turn it up. 'Ere come them blanky crews!

A JUVENILE PLUNGER (*with rather a complicated book on the event*). If Oxford wins, I've got ter git a penny out of 'im, and if Kimebridge wins, you've got ter git a penny outer *me!*

CROWD (*as the Crews flash by*). Go it, Oxford! Ox—ford! No, Kimebridge! Well rowed, Kimebridge! . . . Oxford wins! No, it don't. *I'll* lay it don't! Splendid rycin'. Which on 'em was Oxford? The inside one. No, it worn't—they was *outside.* Well, Oxford was *leadin'*, anyway! . . . There, *that's* all over till next year! Not much to come out for, either—on'y just see 'em for a second or so. Oh, *I* come out for the lark of it, *I* do . . . There goes the pidgins orf . . . We shan't be long knowin' now. . . . 'Ere's the Press Boat comin' back . . . There, wot did I *tell* yer, now? Well, they didn't orter ha' won, that's all—the others was the best crew . . . 'Ere they are, all together on the launch, d'ye see? Seem friendly enough, too, considerin', torkin' to each other and all. Lor, they wouldn't bear no malice now it's over!

[*Crowd disperse, and patronize "Popsy-Wopsy," the Roulette, Ole Billy Fairplay, &c., &c., with renewed zest.*

PRESERVED VENICE.

(*Specially Imported for the London Market.*)

A SATURDAY NIGHT SCENE AT OLYMPIA.

In the Promenade.

A Pessimistic Matron (*the usual beady and bugle-y female, who takes all her pleasure as a penance*). Well, they may *call* it "Venice," but *I* don't see no difference from what it was when the Barnum show was 'ere—except—(*regretfully*)—that then they 'ad the Freaks o' Nature, and Jumbo's skelinton!

Her Husband (*an Optimist—less from conviction than contradiction*). There you go, Maria, finding fault the minute you've put your nose inside! We ain't *in* Venice yet. It's up at the top o' them steps.

The P. M. Up all them stairs? Well, I 'ope it'll be worth seeing when we *do* get there, that's all!

An Attendant (*as she arrives at the top*). Not this door, ma'am—next entrance for Modern Venice.

The Opt. Husb. You needn't go all the way down again, when the steps join like that!

The P. M. I'm not going to walk sideways—*I*'m not a crab, Joe, whatever *you* may think. (Joe *assents, with reservations.*) Now wherever have those other two got to? 'urrying off that way! Oh, *there* they are. 'Ere, Lizzie and Jem, keep along o' me and father, do, or we shan't see half of what's to be seen!

Lizzie. Oh, all right, ma; don't you worry so! (*To* Jem, *her fiancé.*) Don't those tall fellows look smart with the red feathers in their cocked 'ats? What do they call *them?*

Jem (*a young man who thinks for himself*). Well, I shouldn't wonder if

those were the parties they call "Doges"—sort o' police over there, d'ye see?

LIZZIE. They're 'andsomer than 'elmets, I will say *that* for them. (*They enter Modern Venice, amidst cries of "This way for Gondoala tickets! Pass along, please! Keep to your right!" &c., &c.*) It *does* have a foreign look, with all those queer names written up. Think it's like what it is, Jem?

JEM. Bound to be, with all the money they've spent on it. I dare say they've idle-ised it a bit, though.

THE P. M. Where are all these kinals they talk so much about? *I* don't see none!

JEM (*as a break in the crowd reveals a narrow olive-green channel*). Why, what d'ye call *that*, ma?

THE P. M. That a kinal! Why, you don't mean to tell me any barge 'ud——

THE OPT. HUSB. Go on!—you didn't suppose you'd find the Paddington Canal in *these* parts, did you? This is big enough for all *they* want. (*A gondola goes by lurchily, crowded with pot-hatted passengers, smoking pipes, and wearing the uncomfortable smile of children enjoying their first elephant ride.*) That's one o' these 'ere gondoalers—it's a rum-looking concern, ain't it? But I suppose you get *used* to 'em—(*philosophically*) —like everything else!

THE P. M. It gives me the creeps to look at 'em. Talk about *'earses!*

THE OPT. HUSB. Well, look 'ere, we've come out to enjoy ourselves —what d'ye say to having a ride in one, eh?

THE P. M. You won't ketch me trusting *my*self in one o' them tituppy things, so don't you deceive yourself!

THE OPT. HUSB. Oh, it's on'y two foot o' warm water if you do tip over. *Come* on! (*Hailing* GONDOLIER, *who has just landed his cargo.*) 'Ere, 'ow much 'll you take the lot of us for, hey?

GONDOLIER (*gesticulating*). Teekits! you tek teekits—là—you vait!

JEM. He means we've got to go to the orfice and take tickets and stand in a cue, d'yer see?

THE P. M. Me go and form a cue down there and get squeeged like at the Adelphi Pit, all to set in a riokety gondoaler! I can see all *I* want to see without messing about in one o' them things!

THE OTHERS. Well, I dunno as it's worth the extry sixpence, come to think of it. [*They pass on, contentedly.*

JEM. We're on the Rialto Bridge now, Lizzie, d'ye see? The one in Shakspeare, *you* know.

LIZZIE. That's the one they call the "Bridge o' Sighs," ain't it? (*Hazily.*) Is that because there's *shops* on it?

JEM. I dessay. Shops—or else suicides.

LIZZIE (*more hazily than ever*). Ah, the same as the Monument. [*They walk on with a sense of mental enlargement.*

MRS. LAVENDER SALT. It's wonderfully like the real thing, Lavender, isn't it? Of course they can't *quite* get the true Venetian atmosphere!

MR. L. S. Well, Mimosa, they'd have the Sanitary Authorities down on them if they *did*, you know!

MRS. L. S. Oh, you're so horribly unromantic! But, Lavender, couldn't we get one of those gondolas and go about. It would be so lovely to be in one again, and fancy ourselves back in dear Venice, now *wouldn't* it?

MR. L. S. The illusion is cheap at sixpence; so come along, Mimosa!

[*He secures tickets, and presently the* LAVENDER SALTS *find themselves part of a long queue, being marshalled between barriers by Italian gendarmes in a state of politely suppressed amusement.*

MRS. L. S. (*over her shoulder to her husband, as she imagines*). I'd no idea we should have to go through all this! Must we really herd in with all these people? Can't we two manage to get a gondola all to ourselves?

A VOICE (*not* LAVENDER'S—*in her ear*). I'm sure I'm 'ighly flattered, mum, but I'm already suited; yn't I, Dysy?

[DYSY *corroborates his statement with unnecessary emphasis.*

A STURDY DEMOCRAT (*in front, over his shoulder*). Pity yer didn't send word you was coming, mum, and then they'd ha' kep' the place clear of us common people for yer! [MRS. L. S. *is sorry she spoke.*

"I'M SURE I'M 'IGHLY FLATTERED, MUM, BUT I'M ALREADY SUITED."

IN THE GONDOLA—MR. *and* MRS. L. S. *are seated in the back seat, supported on one side by the* HUMOROUS 'ARRY *and his Fiancée, and on the other by a pale bloated youth, with a particularly rank cigar, and the* STURDY DEMOCRAT, *whose two small boys occupy the seat in front.*

THE ST. DEM. (*with malice aforethought*). If you two lads ain't got room there, I dessay this lady won't mind takin' one of yer on her lap. (*To* MRS. L. S., *who is frozen with horror at the suggestion.*) They're 'umin beans, mum, like yerself!

MRS. L. S. (*desperately ignoring her other neighbours*). Isn't that lovely balcony there copied from the one at the Pisani, Lavender—or is it the Contarini? I forget.

MR. L. S. Don't remember—got the Rialto rather well, haven't they? I suppose that's intended for the dome of the Salute down there—not quite the outline though, if I remember right. And, if that's the Campanile of St. Mark's, the colour's too brown, eh?

THE HUM. 'ARRY (*with intention*). Oh, I sy, Dysy, yn't that the Kempynoily of Kennington Oval, right oppersite? and 'aven't they got the Grand Kinel in the Ole Kent Road proper, eh?

DYSY (*playing up to him, with enjoyment*). Jest 'aven't they! On'y I don't quoite remember whether the colour o' them gas-lamps is correct. But there, if we go on torkin' this w'y, other parties might think we wanted to show orf!

MRS. L. S. Do you remember our *last* gondola expedition, Lavender, coming home from the Giudecca in that splendid sunset?

THE HUM. 'ARRY. Recklect you and me roidin' 'ome from Walworth on a rhinebow, Dysy, eh?

CHORUS OF CHAFF (*from the bridges and terraces as they pass*). 'Ullo, 'ere comes another boat-load! 'Igher up, there! . . . Four-wheeler! . . . Ain't that toff in the tall 'at enjoyin' himself? Quite a 'appy funeral! (*&c., &c.*)

MRS. L. S. (*faintly, as they enter the canal in front of the stage*). Lavender, dear, I really can't stand this *much* longer!

MR. L. S. (*to the* BLOATED YOUTH). Might I ask you, sir, not to puff your smoke in this lady's face?—it's extremely unpleasant for her.

THE B. Y. All right, mister, I'm always ready to oblige a lydy—but (*with wounded pride*)—as to its bein' *unpleasant*, yer know, all *I* can tell yer is—(*with sarcasm*)—that this 'appens to be one of the best tuppeny smokes in 'Ammersmith!

MR. L. S. (*diplomatically*). I am sure of that—from the aroma, but if you *could* kindly postpone its enjoyment for a little while, we should be extremely obliged!

THE B. Y. Well, I must keep it *aloive*, yer know. If there's any one 'ere that understands cigars, they'll bear me out as it never smokes the same when you once let it out.

[*The other passengers confirm him in this epicurean dictum, whereupon he sucks the cigar at intervals behind* MRS. L. S.'S *back, during the remainder of the trip.*

MR. L. S. (*to* MRS. L. S. *when they are alone again*). Well, Mimosa, illusion successful, eh?

MRS. L. S. Oh, *don't!*

AT A VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT.

SCENE—*"The Nebuchadnezzar's Head," in the City. Time—The luncheon hour. The interior, which is bright, and tastefully arranged, is crowded with the graminivorous of both sexes. Clerks of a literary turn devour "The Fortnightly" and porridge alternately, or discuss the comparative merits of modern writers. Lady-clerks lunch sumptuously and economically on tea and baked ginger-pudding. Trim Waitresses move about with a sweet but slightly mystic benignity, as conscious of conducting a dietetic mission to the dyspeptic.*

A VEGETARIAN FIANCÉ (*who has met his betrothed by appointment, and is initiating her into the mysteries*). I wish you'd take something more than a mustard-and-cress roll, though, Louise—it gives you such a poor *idea* of the thing. (*With honest pride.*) You just see me put away this plate of porridge. At the "Young Daniel," where I usually lunch, they give you twice the quantity of stuff they do here.

LOUISE (*admiringly*). I'm so glad I've seen you lunch. Now I shall be able to fancy every day exactly what you are having.

HER FIANCÉ (*to assist her imagination*). Mind you, I don't *always* have porridge. Sometimes it's mushroom croquettes, or turnip and onion rissoles,—whatever's going. Now yesterday, for instance, I had——

[*He details exactly what he had, and she listens to these moving episodes with the rapt interest of a Desdemona.*

FIRST LITERARY CLERK. No; but look here, you don't take my *point*. I'm not running down Swinburne—all I'm arguing is, he couldn't have written some of the things Browning did.

SECOND L. C. Of course not—when Browning had written them—*that's* nothing against him.

FIRST L. C. (*warmly*). I'm not saying it *is*. I'm telling you the difference between the two men—now Browning, he makes you *think*.

SECOND L. C. He never made *me* think, that's all *I* know.

THIRD L. C. Nor yet me. Now, 'Erbert Spencer, he *does* make you think, if you like!

FIRST L. C. Now you're getting on to something else. The grand fault I find with Swinburne, is——

SECOND L. C. Hold hard a bit. Have you read him?

THIRD L. C. Yes, let's 'ave that first. 'Ave you *read* 'im?

FIRST L. C. (*with dignity*). I've read as much of him as I care to.

SECOND L. C. (*aggressively*). What have you read of his? Name it.

FIRST L. C. I've read his *Atlantis in Caledonia*, for one thing.

SECOND L. C. (*disappointed*). Well, you don't deny there's poetry in *that*, do you?

FIRST L. C. I don't call it poetry in the sense I call Walt Whitman poetry—certainly not.

SECOND L. C. There you touch a wider question—there's no *rhyme* in Whitman, to begin with.

FIRST L. C. No more there is in Milton; but I suppose you'll admit *he's* a poet.

[*And so on, until none of them is exactly sure what he is arguing about, though each feels he has got decidedly the best of it.*

FIRST LADY CLERK (*at adjoining table, to* SECOND L. C.). How excited those young men do get, to be sure. I do like to hear them taking up such intellectual subjects, though. Now, *my* brothers talk of nothing but horses, and music-halls, and football, and things like that.

SECOND L. C. (*pensively*). I expect it's the difference in food that accounts for it. I don't think I *could* care for a man that ate meat. Are you going to have another muffin, dear? *I* am.

AN ELDERLY LADY (*with short hair and spectacles—to* WAITRESS). Can you bring me some eggs?

WAITRESS. Certainly, madam. How would you like them done—*à la cocotte?*

THE E. L. (*with severity*). Certainly *not*. You will serve them *respectably* dressed, *if* you please!

"À LA COCOTTE?"

WAITRESS (*puzzled*). We can give you "Convent eggs" if you prefer it.

THE E. L. I never encourage superstition—poach them.

Enter a VEGETARIAN ENTHUSIAST, *with a* NEOPHYTE, *to whom he is playing Amphitryon.*

THE VEG. ENTH. (*selecting a table with great care*). Always like to be near the stove, and out of the draught. (*The prettiest* WAITRESS *approaches, and greets him with a sacerdotal sweetness, as one of the Faith, while to the*

NEOPHYTE—*whom she detects, at a glance, as still without the pale—she is severely tolerant.*) Now, what are *you* going to have?

[*Passing him the bill of fare.*

THE NEOPH. (*inspecting the document helplessly*). Well, really, er—I think I'd better follow *your* lead.

THE VEG. ENTH. I generally begin with a plate of porridge myself—clears the palate, y' know.

THE NEOPH. (*unpleasantly conscious that it wouldn't clear* his). I'm afraid that, at this time of day—to tell you the truth (*with desperate candour*), I never *was* a porridge lover.

[*The* WAITRESS *regards him sorrowfully.*

THE VEG. ENTH. Pity! Wholesomest thing you can take. More sustenance to the square inch in a pint of porridge than a leg of mutton. However (*tolerantly*), if you really won't, I can recommend the rice and prunes.

THE NEOPH. (*feebly*). I—I'd rather begin with something a little more——

WAITRESS (*with a sad foreknowledge that she is casting pearls before a swine*). We have "Flageolet Fritters and Cabbage," or "Parsnip Pie with grilled Potatoes"—both very nice.

THE NEOPH. (*braving the unknown*). I'll have some of this—er—"Cinghalese Stew." [*He awaits the result in trepidation.*

CUSTOMER (*behind, dictating his bill*). "What have I had?" Let me see. Braised turnip and bread sauce, fricassée of carrot and artichoke, tomato omelette, a jam roll, and a bottle of zoedone.

[*The* WAITRESS *makes out his voucher accordingly, and awards it to him, with a bright smile of approval and encouragement.*

THE VEG. ENTH. (*who has overheard*). A most excellent selection! That's a man, sir, who knows how to *live!* Ha! here's my porridge. Will you give me some brown sugar with it, please? And—(*to the* N.)—there's your stew—smells good, eh?

THE NEOPH. (*tasting it, and finding it a cunning compound of curried bananas and chicory*). I—I like the *smell*—excellent indeed!

[*He attacks the stew warily.*

THE VEG. ENTH. (*disposing of his porridge*). There! Now I shall have some lentils and spinach with parsley sauce, and a Welsh rarebit to follow—and I think that will about do me. Will you—oh, you haven't finished your stew yet! By the way, what will you drink? I don't often indulge in champagne in the middle of the day; but it's my birthday—so I think we might venture on a bottle between us, eh?

THE NEOPH. (*in whom the Cinghalese Stew has excited a lively thirst*). By all means. I suppose you know the brands here?

THE VEG. ENTH. Only one brand—non-alcoholic, of course. Manufactured, I believe, from—ah—oranges.

THE NEOPH. Exactly so. After all, I'd just as soon have bottled ale—if they keep it, that is.

THE VEG. ENTH. Any quantity of it. What shall it be? They've "Anti-Bass Beer," or "Spruce Stout"; or perhaps you'd like to try their "Pennyroyal Porter"? I'm rather partial to it myself—capital tonic!

THE NEOPH. I—I've no doubt of it. On second thoughts, if you don't mind, I'd rather have water. (*To himself.*) It doesn't *look* Vegetarian!

THE VEG. ENTH. (*more heartily than ever*). Just as you please, my boy. But you don't mean to say you've done!

THE NEOPH. (*earnestly*). Indeed, I couldn't touch another morsel, really!

THE VEG. ENTH. I *thought* that stew looked satisfying; that's where it *is*, you see—a man can come here and get a thoroughly nutritious and filling meal for the trifling sum of fourpence—and yet you meet people who tell you Vegetarianism is a mere passing fad! It's a force that's making itself increasingly felt—you must be conscious of that yourself already?

THE NEOPH. (*politely*). Y-yes—but it's not at all unpleasant at present—really!

Enter a couple of RED-FACED CUSTOMERS *from the country, who seat themselves.*

FIRST REDF. C. Well, I dunno how *you're* feeling—but I feel as if I could peck a bit.

SECOND DO. I can do wi' soom stokin' myself. Tidy soort of a place this. 'Ere, missy! (*to one of the* WAITRESSES, *who awaits his commands with angelic patience*)—you may bring me and my friend a choomp chop a-piece, not too mooch doon, and a sorsedger, wi' two pots o' stout an' bitter—an' lo-ook sharp about it!

[*Sensation—the* WAITRESS *gives them, gently, but firmly, to understand that these coarse and carnivorous propensities must be indulged elsewhere; whereupon they depart, rebuked and abashed, as Scene closes.*

AT A HYPNOTIC SÉANCE.

SCENE—*A Public Hall in a provincial town. The Hypnotist—a tall, graceful, and handsome young man, in well-fitting evening clothes—has already succeeded in putting most of his subjects to sleep, and is going round and inspecting them critically, as they droop limply on a semi-circle of chairs, in a variety of unpicturesque attitudes. The only Lady on the platform is evidently as yet in full possession of her senses.*

FIRST FEMALE SPECTATOR (*to* SECOND). Maria Mangles do take a time sending off, don't she?

SECOND F. S. (*also a friend of* MISS MANGLES). Yes, that she do—it gives her such a silly look, sitting there, the on'y one with her senses about her!

FIRST F. S. It's all affectation—she could shut her eyes fast enough if she *liked!*

SECOND F. S. The 'Ipnotiser's coming round to her now—she'll *have* to go off now. (*With a not unpleasurable anticipation.*) I expect he'll make her do all manner o' ridic'lous things!

FIRST F. S. Well, it will be a lesson to her against making herself so conspicuous another time. *I* shan't pity her.

THE HYP. (*after a brief colloquy with* MISS MANGLES). I see I am not likely to succeed with this lady; so, with many thanks to her on behalf of myself and the audience for coming forward, I will detain her no longer.

[*Applause, amidst which* MISS M. *descends to her seat in the body of the hall, with a smile of conscious triumph.*

FIRST F. S. (*disappointed*). I don't see what she's done to clap their hands about, myself!

SECOND F. S. Nor I neither—taking up his time all for nothing—depend upon it she wouldn't have gone up if he hadn't been so nice-looking!

FIRST F. S. I wouldn't like to think *that* of her myself; but, anyhow, she didn't get much by it, did she? He soon sent *her* packing!

MALE SPECTATOR (*to a woman in front of him*). Evening, Mrs. Midgelly—I see they've got your good man up on the platform.

MRS. M. He *will* go, Mr. Budkin! He's gone up every night the 'Ipnotiser's been here, and says he feels it's going to do him good. So this evening I said I'd come in too, and judge for myself. What good he expects to get, laying there like a damp dishclout, *I* don't know!

[*Meanwhile the* HYPNOTIST *has borrowed a silver-handled umbrella from the audience, and thrust it before the faces of one or two loutish-looking youths, who immediately begin to squint horribly and follow the silver top with their noses, till they knock their heads together.*

MR. BUDKIN (*to* MRS. MIDGELLY). He's going to give your husband a turn of it now.

[*The umbrella handle is applied to* MR. M., *a feeble-looking little man with a sandy top-not; he grovels after the silver top when it is depressed, and makes futile attempts to clamber up the umbrella after it when it is held aloft.*

MRS. M. (*severely*). I haven't patience to look at him. A *kitten* 'ud have had more sense!

THE HYP. (*calling up one of the heavy youths*). Can you whistle, sir? Yes? Then whistle something. (*The* YOUTH *whistles a popular air in a lugubrious tone.*) Now you *can't* whistle—try. (*The* YOUTH *tries—and produces nothing but a close imitation of an air-cushion that is being unscrewed.*) Now, if I were not to wake him up, this young gentleman's friends would never enjoy the benefit of his whistle again!

VOICE (*from a back row*). *Don't* wake him, guv'nor, we can *bear* it!

HYP. (*after restoring the lost talent, and calling up another* YOUTH, *somewhat smartly attired*). Now, sir, what do you drink?

THE YOUTH (*with a sleepy candour*). Beer, when I can get 'old of it!

A FRIEND OF HIS (*in audience*). Jim's 'aving a lark with him—he said as 'ow he meant to kid him like—*he* ain't 'ipnotised, bless yer!

HYP. But you like water, too, don't you? (JIM *admits this—in moderation.*) Try this. (*He gives him a tumbler of water.*) Is that good water?

JIM (*smacking his lips.*) That's good water enough, sir.

HYP. It's bad water—taste it again.

[JIM *tastes, and ejects it with every symptom of extreme disapproval.*

JIM'S FRIEND. Try him with a drop o' Scotch in it—*'e'll* get it down!

HYP. (*to* JIM). There is *no* water in that glass—it's full of sovereigns, don't you see? (JIM *agrees that this is so, and testifies to his conviction by promptly emptying the contents of the glass into his trousers' pocket.*) What have you got in your pocket?

JIM (*chuckling with satisfaction*). Quids—golden sovereigns!

HYP. Wake up! *Now* what do you find in your pocket—any sovereigns?

JIM (*surprised*). Sovereigns? No, sir! (*After putting his hand in his pocket, bringing it out dripping, and dolefully regarding the stream of water issuing from his leg.*) More like water, sir.

[*He makes dismal efforts to dry himself, amidst roars of laughter.*

HIS FRIEND. Old Jim didn't come best out o' that!

HYP. (*to* JIM). You don't feel comfortable? (*Emphatic assent from* JIM.) Yes, you do, you feel no discomfort whatever.

[JIM *resumes his seat with a satisfied expression.*

AN OPEN-MINDED SPECT. Mind yer, if this yere 'Ipnotism can prevent water from being wet, there must be *something* in it!

HYP. I will now give you an illustration of the manner in which, by hypnotic influence, a subject can be affected with an entirely imaginary pain. Take this gentleman. (*Indicating the unfortunate* MR. MIDGELLY, *who is slumbering peacefully.*) Now, what pain shall we give him?

A VOICE. Stomach-ache!

[*This suggestion, however, is so coyly advanced that it fortunately escapes notice.*

HYP. Toothache? Very good—we will give him toothache.

[*The audience receive this with enthusiasm, which increases to rapturous delight when* MR. MIDGELLY'S *cheek begins to twitch violently, and he nurses his jaw in acute agony; the toothache is then transferred to another victim, who writhes in an even more entertaining manner, until the unhappy couple are finally relieved from torment.*

A SPECT. Well, it's better nor any play, this is—but he ought to ha' passed the toothache round the lot of 'em, just for the fun o' the thing!

MRS. MIDGELLY. I should ha' thought there was toothache enough without coming here to get more of it, but so long as Midgelly's enjoyin' himself, *I* shan't interfere!

[The HYPNOT. *has impressed his subjects with the idea that there is an angel at the other end of the hall, and they are variously affected by the celestial apparition, some gazing with a rapt grin, while others invoke her stiffly, or hail her like a cab.* MR. MIDGELLY *alone exhibits no interest.*

MR. BUDKIN (*to* MRS. M.). Your 'usband don't seem to be putting himself out, angel or no angel.

MRS. M. (*complacently*). He knows too well what's due to *me*, Mr. Budkin. *I'm* angel enough for him!

HYP. I shall now persuade this gentleman that there is a beautiful young lady in green at the door of this hall. (*To* MR. M.) Do you see her, sir?

MR. M. (*rising with alacrity*). I do. Lovely creature!

[*He suddenly snatches up a decanter of water, and invites his invisible charmer, in passionate pantomime, to come up and share it with him—to the infinite delight of the Audience, and disgust of his Wife.*

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE.

MR. MIDGELLY (*as he rejoins his Wife*). I felt the influence more strongly to-night than what I have yet; and the Professor says, if I only keep on coming up every night while he's here, I shall soon be completely susceptible to—— Why, whatever's the matter, my dear?

MRS. M. Matter! You're quite susceptible enough as it is; and, now I know how you can go on, you don't catch me letting *you* get 'ipnotised again. You and your young lady in green indeed!

"I DO. LOVELY CREATURE!"

MR. M. (*utterly mystified*). Me and my—I don't know what you're alluding to. It's the first *I've* heard of it!

MRS. M. (*grimly*). Well, it won't be the last by a long way. Oh, the insight I've had into your character this evening, Midgelly!

[MR. M. *is taken home, to realize that Hypnotism is not altogether without its dangers.*

WRESTLING WITH WHISTLERS.

(A REMINISCENCE OF A RECENT EXHIBITION.)

SCENE—*The Goupil Gallery. Groups of more or less puzzled Britons discovered, conscientiously endeavouring to do justice to the Collection, having realized that* MR. WHISTLER'S *work is now considered entitled to serious consideration, but feeling themselves unable to get beyond a timid tolerance. In addition to these, there are* FRANK PHILISTINES *who are here with a fixed intention of being funny,* MATRONS *with a strongly domesticated taste in Art,* SERIOUS ELDERLY LADIES, LITERAL PERSONS, *&c., &c.*

A LADY (*after looking at a representation of Old Battersea Bridge—in the tone of a person who feels she is making a liberal concession*). Well, do you know, I must say that *isn't* so bad. I shouldn't so much mind having *that* in the room, should you?

HER COMPANION (*dubiously*). Well, I don't know. He's put a steamer in. Should you think there *were* steamers in—a—(*vaguely*)—those days?

FIRST LADY (*evidently considering* MR. WHISTLER *capable of any eccentricity*). Oh, I don't suppose he would mind *that* much.

FIRST LITERAL PERSON (*coming to the portrait of* MISS ALEXANDER). Well—(*plaintively*)—he *might* have put a nicer expression on the child!

SECOND DO. DO. Yes—very unpleasing. (*Refers to Catalogue.*) Oh, I see it says—"It is simply a disagreeable presentment of a disagreeable young lady."

FIRST DO. DO. (*rejoicing that the painter has vindicated himself this time*). Ah—that *explains* it, then. Of course if he *meant* it——!

A SERIOUS ELDERLY LADY. There's one thing I must say I *do* like, my dear, and that's the way he puts down all the unfavourable criticisms on his pictures. So straightforward and honest of him, *I* call it.

HER COMPANION. Yes, but I expect he can't help seeing how right and sensible the critics are, you know. Still—(*charitably*)—it shows he would do better if he *could!*

AN ADVANCED NEPHEW (*who is endeavouring to convert a* PHILISTINE UNCLE *to the superiority of the Modern School*). Now here, uncle, look at this. Look at the way the figure looms out of the canvas, look at the learning in the simple sweep of the drapery, the *drawing* of it, and the masterly grace of the pose—you don't mean to tell me you don't call *that* a magnificent portrait?

HIS UNCLE. Who's it of? That's what *I* want to know first.

NEPHEW (*coldly*). You will find it in the Catalogue, no doubt—No. 41.

UNCLE (*looking it up*). "*Arrangement in Black. La Dame au Brodequin Jaune.*"—the lady in a yellow something or other. Tchah! And not a word to tell you who she's supposed to *be?* If I pay a shilling for a Catalogue, I expect to find information in it. And let me ask you—where's the interest in looking at a portrait when you're not told who it's intended for?

[*The* NEPHEW, *not being prepared to answer this difficult query, leads his relative gently up to a "Nocturne in Opal and Silver." The* UNCLE *conveys his opinion of it by a loud and expressive snort.*

FIRST PROSAIC PERSON (*before No.* 28). Valparaiso, is it? (*Hopefully.*) Well, come, I *ought* to recognize this—I've *been* there often enough. (*Inspecting it closely.*) Ha—um!

SECOND P. P. (*with languid interest*). Is it *like?*

FIRST P. P. I could tell you better if he'd done it by daylight. I can't make out this in the front—looks to me like the top of a *house*, or something. Don't remember *that.*

SECOND P. P. I think it's meant for a jetty, landing-stage, or that sort of thing, and, when you look *into* it, there's something that seems intended for people—*most* extraordinary, isn't it?

THE DOMESTICATED MATRON (*who is searching for a picture with a subject to it*). There, Caroline, it's evidently a *harbour*, you see, and ships,

and they're letting off fireworks—probably for a regatta. Does it tell you what it is in the Catalogue?

CAROLINE (*after consulting it*). It only says, "*A Nocturne in Blue and Gold*"—oh, yes—(*reading*)—"a splash and splutter of brightness, on a black ground, to depict a display of fireworks."

HER MOTHER (*gratified at her own intelligence*). I thought it *must* be fireworks. He seems quite *fond* of fireworks, doesn't he?

FIRST FACETIOUS PHILISTINE. Hullo, what have we got here? "*Crepuscule, in Flesh-colour and Green.*" Very *like* one, too, I dare say—when you know what it is.

SECOND F. P. As far as I can make it out, a Crepuscule's either a Harmony inside out, or a Symphony upside down—it don't much matter.

A LADY (*who is laboriously trying to catch the right spirit*). "*The Blue Wave at Biarritz.*" Now I *do* admire that. And what I like even better than the Blue wave is this great Brown one breaking in the foreground—so exactly *like* water, isn't it, Dick?

DICK (*not a Whistlerite*). Y—yes—just. Only it's a rock, you know.

THE LADY. But if that's the way he *saw* it, Dick!

DICK. Here's a thing! "*St. Mark's, Venice.*" I'll *trouble* you! What's he done with the flagstaffs and the bronze horses and the pigeons? *I* never saw the place look like that.

THE LADY. Because it didn't happen to be *foggy* while we were there, that's all.

FIRST PROS. PERSON. Ah, there's old Carlyle, you see! Dear me, what a very badly fitting coat—see how it bulges over his chest!

SECOND P. P. Yes; I dare say he buttoned the wrong button—philosopher and all that sort of thing, y'know.

FIRST P. P. (*sympathetically*). Well, I *do* think Whistler might have *told* him of it!

IN THE SECOND ROOM.

THE MATRON IN SEARCH OF A SUBJECT. Ah, now, this really is more *my* idea of a picture. Quite a pretty *crétonne* those curtains, and there's a little girl reading a book, and a looking-glass with reflections and all, and a young lady in a riding-habit—just going out for a ride.

CAROLINE. Yes, mother. Or just come in from one.

HER MOTHER. Do see what it's called. "*The Morning Canter*," or "*Back from the Row*"—something of that kind, I *expect* it would be.

CAROLINE. All it says is, "*A Harmony in Green and Rose.*"

THE MOTHER (*disappointed*). Now, why can't he give it some *sensible* name, instead of taking away all one's interest!

THE PHIL. UNCLE (*whom a succession of Symphonies and Harmonies has irritated to the verge of fury*). Don't talk to me, sir! Don't tell me any of these things are pictures. Look at *this*—a young woman in an outlandish dress sitting on the floor—on the bare floor!—in a litter of Japanese sketches! And he has the confounded impertinence to call it a "*Caprice*"—a "*Caprice in Purple and Gold.*" *I'd* purple and gild him, sir, if I had *my* way! Where's the *sense* in such things? What do they *teach* you? What *story* do they tell? Where's the *human interest* in them? Depend upon it, sir, these things are rubbish—sheer rubbish, according to all *my* notions of Art, and I think you'll allow I *ought* to know something about it?

HIS NEPHEW (*provoked beyond prudence*). You certainly ought to know more than *that*, my dear unc—— Are you going?

THE UNCLE (*grimly*). Yes—to see my solicitor, sir. (*To himself, savagely.*) That confounded young prig will find he's paid dear enough for his precious Whistlers—if I don't have a fit in the cab!

[*He goes: the* NEPHEW *wonders whether his attempt at proselytizing was quite worth while.*

A SERIOUS ELDERLY LADY. I've no *patience* with the man. Look at Gustave Doré, now. I'm sure *he* was a beautiful artist, if you *like*. Did *he* go and call his "*Leaving the Prætorium*" a "Symphony" or a "Harmony," or any nonsense of that kind? Of course not—and yet look at the *difference!*

AN IMPRESSIONABLE PERSON (*carried away by the local influence—to the man at the wicket, blandly*). Could you kindly oblige me by exchanging this "Note in Black and White" for an "Arrangement in Silver and Gold"?

[*Finds himself cruelly misunderstood, and suspected of frivolity.*

DILATORY DINNERS.

SCENE—*The Grounds of a certain Exhibition. On this particular evening, there has been a slight hitch in the culinary arrangements, and the relations between the Chef and the Waiters are apparently strained. Enter an* EGOTISTIC AMPHITRYON, *followed by a meek and youthful* GUEST.

THE EGOTISTIC AMPHITRYON (*concluding an harangue*). Well, all *I've* got to say is, I've been here half-an-hour—(*with a bitter sense of the anomaly of the situation*)—waiting about for *you!!* (*They seat themselves at one of the little tables under the verandah.*) Oh, you're going to sit *that* side, are you? It's all the same to me, except that there's a confounded draught here which—well, you're young, and these things don't affect you—or oughtn't to. (*They exchange sides.*) We shall have to hurry our dinner now, if we mean to hear anything of the music. That was the reason I expressly told you seven sharp. Here, waiter! (WAITER *presents a carte, and stands by with a proud humility.*) Now, what are you going to have? (*To* GUEST.) You don't mind? I hate to hear a man say he doesn't care what he eats—he *ought* to care, he *must* care. What do you say to this—"Potage Bisque d'écrevisses; Saumon Sauce Hollandaise; Brimborions de veau farcis à l'imprévu; Ducklings and Green Peas; New Potatoes; Salad"? Simple and—ah—satisfying. (*To* WAITER.) Let us have that as sharp as you can; do you hear?

WAITER. Quick? Yes, I dell zem. [*He hurries off.*

THE E. A. Hang the fellow, he's forgotten the wine! (*To* GUEST.) What will you drink?

THE GUEST (*thinks it will look greedy if he suggests champagne*). Oh—er—whatever *you're* going to drink.

THE E. A. Well, I'm going to have a glass of champagne myself. I want it after all this worry. But if you prefer beer (*considerately*), say so. (*The* GUEST, *in a spirit of propitiation, prefers beer.*) Well, we could have managed a bottle of Pommery between us, and it's never so good to my mind in the pints—but please yourself, of course.

[*The* GUEST *feels that his moderation has missed fire, but dares not retract; they sit in silence for some time, without anything of importance happening, except that a strange Waiter swoops down and carries away their bread-basket.*

A MEEK MAN (*at an adjoining table, who, probably for family reasons, is entertaining his Sister-in-law, a lady with an aquiline nose and remarkably thick eyebrows*). You know, Horatia, I call this sort of thing very jolly, having dinner like this in the fresh air, eh?

[*He rubs his hands under the table.*

HORATIA (*acidly*). It may be so, Augustus, when we *do* have it. At present we have been sitting here fifteen minutes, and had nothing but fresh air and small flies, and, as I don't pretend to be a chameleon myself, why—— [*She fans herself vigorously.*

AUGUSTUS. Well, you know, my dear, we were warned that the trout *en papillotes* might take some little time. I suppose (*with mild jocularity*) —it's a fashionable fish—wants to come in with a "little head sunning over with curls," as the poet says.

HORATIA. Please don't make jokes of that sort—unless you wish to destroy the little appetite I have left!

AUGUSTUS (*penitently*). Never mind—I won't do it again. Here's our waiter at last. *Now* we're all right!

(*The* WAITER *puts a dish down upon another table, and advances with the air of a family friend who brings bad tidings.*

HORATIA. Will you kindly let us have that trout at once?

THE WAITER (*bending down to* AUGUSTUS *with pity and sympathy*). Fery sôry to dell you, esbecially after keebin you so long vaiting, bot (*thinks how he can break it most gently*) ve haf zo many beople hier to-day, and zey haf shust dold me in ze gitchen zere is no more drout. Zis hote vedder ze drout he vill nod shtay!

AUGUSTUS (*mildly*). No, of course not—well, let me see, now, what can you——?

THE E. A. Here, you Kellner, come here, can't you? What the——

WAITER (*to* AUGUSTUS). Von minute. I gom back bresently. (*To* E. A.) You vant your pill, sir, yes?

THE E. A. (*exploding*). My bill! Confound it! I want something to eat first. When is that Bisque coming?

WAITER. Ach, peg your bardon, ve haf peen so pusy all day. Your Bisque vill pe retty diregly. I go to vetch him. [*He goes.*

HORATIA. Now we're farther off from getting any food than ever! I suppose you mean to do *something*, Augustus?

AUGUSTUS. Of course—certainly. I shall speak very strongly. (*Bleating.*) Waiter!

HORATIA (*with scorn*). *Do* you imagine they will pay the least attention to a noise like a sixpenny toy? Let them see you *insist* upon being obeyed.

AUGUSTUS. I am—I mean, I will—I am very much annoyed. (*Fiercely.*) Wa-ai-ter!

A STERN WAITER (*appearing suddenly*). You vant somsing, sir?

AUGUSTUS (*apologetically*). Yes; we should—er—like something to eat—anything—so long as you can bring it at once, if you don't mind. We—this lady is rather in a hurry, and we've waited some little time already, you see.

THE WAITER. Peg your bardon, zis is nod my daple. I send your vaiter. [*He vanishes.*

THE E. A. Scandalous! over twenty minutes we've been here! Ha! at last! (*A* WAITER *appears with a tureen, which he uncovers.*) Here, what do you call *this?*

WAITER. Groûte au Bot—you order him, yes? No? I dake him avay!

[*He whisks it away, to the chagrin of the* GUEST, *who thought it smelt nice.*

THE E. A. I ordered Bisque—where is it? and I want some wine, too—a pint of Pommery '84, and a small lager. If they're not here very soon, I'll——

THE GUEST (*trying to make the best of things*). Nothing for it but patience, I suppose.

THE E. A. (*with intention*). I had very little of *that* left before I sat down, I can tell you!

A SARCASTIC AND SOLITARY DINER. Waiter, could you spare me one moment of your valuable time? (*The* WAITER *halts irresolutely.*) It is so long since I had the pleasure of speaking to you, that you may possibly have forgotten that about three-quarters of an hour ago I ventured to express a preference for an Entrecôte aux pommes de terre, with a half-bottle of Beaune. Could you give me any idea how much longer those rare dainties may take in preparing, and in the meantime enable me to support the pangs of starvation by procuring me the favour of a penny roll, if I am not trespassing too much upon your good-nature?

[*The* WAITER, *in a state of extreme mystification and alarm, departs to inform the* MANAGER.

THE E. A.'S WAITER (*reappearing with a small plated bowl, champagne*

bottle, and glass of lager). I regred fery moch to haf to dell you zat zere is only shust enough Bisque for von berson.

[*He bows with well-bred concern.*

THE E. A. Confound it all! (*To* GUEST.) Here, *you*'d better take this, now it's here. Afraid of it, eh? Well, Bisque *is* apt to disagree with some people. (*To* WAITER.) Give it to me, and bring this gentleman some gravy soup, or whatever else you have ready. (*He busies himself with his Bisque, while the* GUEST, *in pure absence of mind, drinks the champagne with which the* WAITER *has filled his glass.*) Here, what are you doing? *I* didn't order lager. (*Perceives the mistake.*) Oh, you've changed your mind, have you? (*To* GUEST.) All right, of course, only it's a pity you couldn't say so at once. (*To* W.) Another pint of Pommery, and take this lager stuff away. (*Exit* W.; *the unfortunate* GUEST, *in attempting to pass the bottle, contrives to decant it into his host's soup.*) Hullo, what the—there—(*controlling himself*). You might have left me the *soup*, at all events! Well—well—it's no use saying any more about it. I suppose I shall get something to eat some day.

[*General tumult from several tables; appeals to the* WAITERS, *who lose their heads and upbraid one another in their own tongue;* HORATIA *threatens bitterly to go in search of buns and lemonade at a refreshment bar. Sudden and timely appearance of energetic Manager; explanations, apologies, promises. Magic and instantaneous production of everybody's dinner. Appetite and anger appeased, as Scene closes in.*

MATINÉE MANIA.

(A SKETCH AT ANY THEATRE ON MOST AFTERNOONS.)

SCENE—*The Front of the House. In the Boxes and Dress-circle are friends and relations of the* AUTHOR. *In the Stalls are a couple of Stray Critics who leave early, actors and actresses "resting," more friends and relations. In the Pit, the front row is filled by the* AUTHOR'S *domestic servants, the landladies of several of the performers, and a theatrical charwoman or two, behind them a sprinkling of the general public, whose time apparently hangs heavily on their hands. In a Stage-box is the* AUTHOR *herself, with a sycophantic* COMPANION. *A murky gloom pervades the Auditorium; a scratch orchestra is playing a lame and tuneless Schottische for the second time, to compensate for a little delay of fifteen minutes between the first and second Tableaux in the Second Act. The orchestra ceases, and a* CHECKTAKER *at the Pit door whistles "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay!" Some restless spirits stamp feebly.*

THE AUTHOR. I wish they would be a *little* quicker. I've a good mind to go behind myself and hurry them up. The audience are beginning to get impatient.

HER COMPANION. But that shows how *interested* they are, *doesn't* it, dear?

AUTHOR. I think it *ought* to interest them, but I *did* expect they would have shown a little more enthusiasm over that situation in the last *tableau*—they're rather a *cold* audience!

COMP. It's above their heads, dear, that's where it is—plays are such rubbish now-a-days, people don't appreciate a really *great* drama just at first. I do hope Mr. Irving, Mr. Hare, and Mr. Beerbohm Tree will come in—I'm sure they'll be only too *anxious* to secure it!

AUTHOR. I don't know that I should care for it to come out at the

Lyceum, but of course if the terms were very—oh, they're beginning at last! I hope this light comedy scene will go well. (*Curtain rises: Comic dialogue—nothing whatever to do with the plot—between a Footman and a Matinée Maidservant in short sleeves, a lace tucker, and a diamond necklace; depression of Audience. Serious characters enter and tell one another long and irrelevant stories, all about nothing. When the auditor remarks,* "Your story is indeed a sad one—but go on," *a shudder goes through the house, which becomes a groan ten minutes later when the listener says:* "You have told me *your* history—now hear *mine!*" *He tells it; it proves, if possible, duller and more irrelevant than the other man's. A love-scene follows, characterised by all the sparkle and brilliancy of "Temperance Champagne": the House witnesses the fall of the Curtain with apathy.*)

AUTHOR. That love-scene was perfectly *ruined* by the acting! She *ought* to have turned her head aside when he said, "Dash the tea-pot!" but she never *did*, and he left out *all* that about dreaming of her when he was ill with measles in Mashonaland! I wish they wouldn't have such long waits, though. We timed the piece at rehearsal, and, with the cuts I made, it only played about four hours; but I'm afraid it will take longer than that to-day.

COMP. I don't care *how* long it is—it's so *beautifully* written!

AUTHOR. Well, I put my whole *soul* in it, you know; but it's not till this next act that I show my full power. [*Curtain rises on a drawing-room, furnished with dingy wrecks from the property-room—the home of* JASPER, *the Villain, who is about to give an evening party. Enter a* HOODED CRONE. "Sir Jasper, I have a secret of importance, which can only be revealed to your private ear!" (*Shivers of apprehension amongst the audience.*) SIR J. "Certainly, go into yonder apartment, and await me there." (*Sigh of relief from spectators.*) A FOOTMAN. "Sir, the guests wait!" SIR J. (*with lordly ease*). "Bid them enter!" (*They troop in unannounced, and sit down against the wall, entertaining one another in dumb-show.* FOOTMAN (*re-entering*). "Sir, a roughly-dressed stranger, who says he knew you in Norway, under an *alias*, requests a few words." SIR J. "Confusion!—one of my former accomplices in crime—my guests must not be present at this interview!" (*To Guests.*) "Ladies

and gentlemen, will you step into the adjoining room for a few minutes, and examine my collection of war-weapons?" (*Guests retire, with amiable anticipations of enjoyment. The Stranger enters, and tells another*

"SIR, A ROUGHLY-DRESSED STRANGER . . . REQUESTS A FEW WORDS."

long story.) "I smile still," he concludes—"but even a *dead* man's skull will smile. Allow me then the privileges of death!" (*At this an irreverent Pittite suddenly guffaws, and the Audience from that moment perceives that the piece possesses a humorous side. The Stranger goes; the*

Guests return. Re-enter FOOTMAN.) "Sir, an elderly man, who was acquainted with your family years ago, insists on seeing you, and will take no denial!" VILLAIN (*with presence of mind—to Guests*). "Ladies and gentlemen, will you step into the neighbouring apartment, and join the dancers?" (*The Guests obey—The* ELDERLY MAN *enters, and denounces* JASPER, *who mendaciously declares that he is his own second cousin* JOSEPH; *whereupon the visitor turns down his coat-collar, and takes off a false beard.*) "Do you know me now, Jasper Shoppun?" he cries. "*I* am Joseph—your second cousin." .... "What, ho, Sir Insolence!" the Villain retorts. "And so you come to deliver me to justice?" ... "Not so," says Joseph. "Long years ago I swore to my dying aunt to protect your reputation, even at the expense of my own. I come to warn you that" (&c., &c.). (*The Audience, who are now in excellent spirits, receive every incident with uncontrollable merriment till the end of the Act. Another long wait, enlivened by a piccolo solo.*)

AUTHOR. Lavinia, it's *too* disgraceful—it's a deliberate conspiracy to turn the piece into ridicule. I never thought my *own relations* would turn against me—and yet I might have known!

COMP. It wasn't the *play* they laughed at, dear—that's lovely—but it's so ridiculously *acted*, you know!

AUTHOR. Of course the acting *is* abominable—but they might make allowances for *that*. It *is* so unfair! [*The Play proceeds. The Heroine's jealousy has been excited by the Villain, for vague purposes of his own, and the Hero is trying to disarm her suspicions.* SHE. "But why are you constantly going from Paris to London at the beck and call of that man?" HE (*aside*). "If she only knew that I do it to shield my second cousin, Jasper—but my oath!—I cannot tell her! (*To her.*) The reason is very simple, darling—he is my Private Secretary!" (*Roars of inextinguishable laughter, drowning the Wife's expressions of perfect satisfaction and confidence. The Hero wants to go out; the Wife begs him to stay; she has "a presentiment of evil—a dread of something unseen, unknown." He goes: the Villain enters in evening dress.*) VILLAIN. "Your husband is false to you. Meet me in half-an-hour at the lonely hut by the cross-roads, and you shall have proof of his guilt." (*The Wife departs at once, just as she*

is. Villain, soliloquising.) "So—my diabolical schemes prosper. I have got Joseph out of the way by stratagem, decoyed his wife—my early love—to a lonely hut, where my minions wait to seize her. Now to abduct the child, destroy the certificate of vaccination which alone stands between me and a Peerage, set fire to the home of my ancestors, accuse Joseph of all my crimes, and take my seat in the House of Lords as the Earl of Addelegg! Ha-ha—a good night's work! a good——" JOSEPH (*from back*). "Not so. I have heard all. I will *not* have it. You *shall* not! (&c., &c.) VILLAIN. "You would thwart my schemes?" JOSEPH (*firmly*). "I would. My wife and child shall *not*——" (&c., &c.) VILLAIN (*slowly*). "And the oath you swore to my mother, your dying aunt, would you break that?" JOSEPH (*overcome*). "My oath! my aunt! Ah, no, I cannot, I *must* not break it. Jasper Shoppun, I am powerless—you must do your evil will!" (*He sinks on a settee. Triumph of Villain, tableaux, and Curtain.*)

AUTHOR. I wouldn't have *believed* that a modern audience would treat heroic conduct like that as if it was *laughable*. It's enough to make one give up play-writing altogether!

COMP. Oh, I wouldn't do *that*, dear. You mustn't punish Posterity! [*The Play goes on and on; the Villain removes inconveniently repentant tools, and saddles the Hero with his nefarious deeds. The Hero is arrested, but reappears, at liberty, in the next Act (about the Ninth), and no reference whatever is made to the past. Old serious characters turn up again, and are welcomed with uproarious delight. At the end of a conversation, lasting a quarter of an hour, the Lady's-maid remarks that "her Mistress has been very ill, and must not talk too much." Cheers from Audience. General joy when the Villain returns a hopeless maniac. Curtain about six, and loud calls for Author.*)

AUTHOR. Nothing will *induce* me to take a call after the shameful way they've behaved! And it's all the fault of the acting. When we get home, I'll read the play all through to you again, and you'll see how it *ought* to have been done! A hundred and twenty pounds simply thrown away!

[*Retires, consoled by her* COMPANION, *and the consciousness that true genius is invariably unappreciated.*

MORE *POT-POURRI* FROM THE PARK.

SCENE—*The Park, near Cumberland Gate, on almost any fine afternoon. Behind the rails separating the turf from the paths, Orators, Preachers, and Reciters are holding forth, for the delectation of small groups, who are mostly engaged in discussing some totally different subject. A set debate, with a time-limit, and a purely ornamental Chairman, is in progress between a* PARNELLITE *and an* ANTI-PARNELLITE. *The Reader will kindly imagine himself to be passing slowly along the line.*

A YOUTHFUL SOCIALIST (*haranguing the usual crowd of well-to-do loungers, and working himself up to the requisite white-heat of factitious fury*). And what are these Capitalists? I'll tell yer. Jest a lot o' greedy gobblers and profit-mongering sharks, as eat up the smaller fry. And what are *you?* Why, you're the small fish as eat mud—and let yourselves *be* gobbled! (*The crowd accept this definition of themselves with perfect gaiety and good-humour.*) Some will tell yer that these lazy, idle loafers work as hard as what we do ourselves. (*Derisive laughter at this ridiculous idea.*) Mind yer, I'm not saying they don't. *Honly*, the 'arder they work, the worse it is for us; because the more they work the more they *rob!* That's what they send their sons to Oxford and to Cambridge—as was built and endowed for the benefit of us, the labourin' classes—for. They send 'em there to learn *'ow to rob!*

[*Here a discussion breaks out between a* SCEPTIC *and a* SPIRITUALIST, *who, with half-a-dozen interested auditors, have been putting their heads together in a corner.*

THE SCEPTIC. No,—but keep to the point,—you're shufflin' the question. I want to argue this out on logical grounds. I know as well as

you do that, if only I 'ave 'armony and a round table in my family, I can make that table dance the poker—but what I'm puttin' to *you* is (*triumphantly*), 'ow does that prove to me as I'm in communication with the Bogie Man? That's what *you've* got to answer.

THE Y. S. We Soshalists 'ate the Tories as we 'ate sin. Why, young polertician as I ham (*&c., &c.*).

THE SPIRITUALIST (*an elderly and earnest person*). All I can reply to you is, we Spiritualists do not think—we *know* that these phenomena appear—yes, as surely as I know I am 'olding this stick in my 'and.

THE SCEPTIC (*pityingly*). There you go again, yer see—that stick ain't the point. *I* can see the stick. A stick ain't a phenomena—you're confusin' two different things. Now I'm goin' to offer you a fair challenge. You perdooce me a Spirit—not in a back room, with the lights out, but *'ere*, in broad daylight, in this Park—you get that Spirit to naturalize itself, or whatever you call it, and I'll *believe* in 'im. Come now!

A BYSTANDER. Ah, that's the way to corner *'is* sort. 'E knows 'e carn't *do* it!

THE SPIRITUALIST (*with a smile of sad superiority*). Ridicule ain't *argyment.* [*The discussion continues.*

THE YOUNG SOCIALIST. Don't tork to me of Patriotism! What have the likes of you and me got to be patriotic about? I'm a Universalist, I am, and so long as a man rallies round our glorious Red Flag (*here he waves a dingy scarlet rag on a stick*), it's all one to me whether his own colour is black, yeller, green, brown, *or* white! [*Applause.*

RECITER NUMBER ONE (*in the midst of a thrilling prose narrative about a certain "'Arry," who has apparently got into legal difficulties for having thrown a cocoa-nut stick at a retired Colonel*). Well, I went into the Court 'ouse, and there, sure enough, was my pore mate 'Arry in the dock, and there was hold Ginger-whiskers (*laughter*) a setting on the bench along with the hother beaks, lookin' biliouser, and pepperier, and more happerplecticker nor ever! "Prison-ar," he sez, addressin' 'Arry (*imitation of the voice and manner of a retired Colonel*), "Prison-ar, 'ave you—har —hanythink to say in your beyarf—har?" And then, hall of a sudden,

I sor a flash come into my dear 'ole comride 'Arry's heyes, as he strightened 'imself in the dock, and gave the milingtery sloot, and then, in a voice as sounded as true and sweet and clear as a bell, he sez——

A DINGY AND UNPREPOSSESSING PREACHER (*unctuously*). Well, beloved friends, as I was telling yer, I went 'ome to the 'ouse of that pious Methodist lady, and she told me as 'ow she 'ad two dear unconverted sons,

"YER MAY SOMETIMES HENTERTAIN A ANGEL UNAWARES!"

an' I knelt down (*&c., &c.*), an' after that we 'ad our tea, and then I preached a sermon—ah, I well remember I took my tex from (*&c., &c.*)—an' then she gave me supper (*more unctuously still*), as nice a bit o' cold beef and 'ome-brewed ale as ever I wish to taste, and I slep' that blessed night in a warm comfortable bed—and this (*drawing the inevitable moral*) this brings me round to what I started on, inasmuch as it proves (*with a forbidding smile*) as 'ow yer may sometimes hentertain a angel unawares!

RECITER NUMBER TWO (*giving his own private version of "The Ticket of Leave Man"*). Fourpence 'ap'ny, gentlemen, is *not* a very 'arty nor corjial recognition of my talent; *'owever*, I will now perceed with the Drarmer. The curtain rises upon the Second Hact. Hover three years 'ave elapsed since Robert Brierley——(*&c.*). We are in May Hedwardses lodgings. She is torkin' to 'er goldfinch. If you boys don't give over larkin' and stand back, you'll get a cuff on some of your 'eds. "Goldie," she sez, "I've 'ad a letter from *'Im* this morning!" And the bird puts his little 'ed a one side, and a'most seems as if he compre'ended 'er meanin'! Mrs. Willoughby is 'eard outside sayin', "May I come in?" I will now hendeavour to give you a imitation of Mrs. Willoughby.

[*He cocks his hat rather more on one side, to indicate feminine garrulity, and continues.*

ANTI-PARNELLITE IRISHMAN (*warmly*). Is it kape to the point? Oi till that white-feeced an' black-hearrted loiar, Tim Murphy, that if he interrups me wance more whoile oi'm in possession o' the chair, oi'll stip down an' call 'um to orrder by landin' 'um a clump on the conk!

RECITER NUMBER THREE (*who is working his way through a blood-curdling poem, with a hat on the ground before him*)—

And on came them maddened 'orses, with their foiery, smokin' breath;
As were bearin' the woman I lurved to a crule and 'orrible death!
(*Pathetically.*) 'Ow could I save my darlin' from layin' a mangled 'eap
On the grorss below where the buttercups blow, along of the innercent sheep?
(*Wildly.*) I felt my brine was a-reeling—I 'adn't a minnit to lose!

[*He strains forward, in agony.*

With a stifled prayer, and a gasp for air, I——

(*Here he suddenly becomes aware of an overlooked penny on the grass, and replaces it carefully in the hat before proceeding.*

FIRST BYSTANDER (*discussing Physical Courage with a friend*). No, I never 'ad no pluck. I don't see the use of it myself—on'y gits you into rows. (*Candidly.*) I'm a blanky coward, I am.

HIS FRIEND (*admiringly*). Give us yer 'and. Yer can't be a blankier coward than *me!*

THE A. P. (*with just pride*). Oi've been wan o' the biggest libertines in this or anny other city in me toime—there's no blagardhism oi'd have put beyant me—but oi tell ye this. If Parnell was to come up to me here, now, and ask me to sheek um by the hand, oi'd say, "Shtand back, ye d—d scoundrel!" Ah, oi would *that!*

BELATED ORATOR (*perorating to an embarrassed stranger on a seat before him, under a muddled impression that he is addressing a spell-bound multitude*). I tell yer—yes, hevery man, and hevery woman among yer—(*here he bends forward, and touches his hearer's right and left elbow impressively*)—don't you go away under the impression I'm talking of what I don't understan'! (*The Stranger shifts his leg and looks another way.*) I speak sense, don't I? *You* never 'eard nothin' like this afore, *any* of yer, *'ave* yer? That's because I read between the lines! (*Waving his arm wildly.*) An' I want each man and boy of you to 'member my words, and *hact* upon them when the time comes!

[*Here he staggers off with a proud and exalted air, to the immense relief of his hearer.*

THE AUTOMATIC PHYSIOGNOMIST.

SCENE—*The Grounds of an Exhibition, near an ingenious machine constructed to reveal the character and future of a person according to the colour of his or her hair, for the small consideration of one penny. A party of Pleasure-Seekers are examining it.*

FIRST PLEASURE-SEEKER (*a sprightly young lady of the name of* LOTTIE). "Put in a penny and get a summary of your character from the colour of your 'air." I wonder what they'll have *next!*

SECOND PL.-S. (*her admirer, a porridge-faced young man with pink eyelids and flaming hair, addressed as* 'ECTOR *by his intimates*). Ah, it's surprising how far they've got, it reelly is. And beginning with butterscotch, too!

AUNT MARIA. Come on, do—you don't want to waste no more time over that rubbidge!

FOURTH PL.-S. (*a lanky youth, with pale hair and a receding chin, to his fiancée*). Hadn't we better be making a move if we're going to 'ear the band, Carrie?

CARRIE. I shall move on when I *like*, without *your* leave, Freddy; so make no mistake.

FREDDY. Oh, *I*'m in no 'urry. I only thought your aunt was getting —but don't mind me. [CARRIE *does not mind him.*

DOLPH (*the funny man of the party*). 'Old on a bit! I've got some coppers. I'm going to sample this concern. I'll put in for all of you—it's *my* treat, this is. We'll begin with Aunt Maria. What colour do you call *your* 'air now? I don't see any slot marked "cawfy-colour."

AUNT MARIA. Never *you* mind what colour my 'air is—it's a pity you can't find a better use for your pennies.

DOLPH (*inserting a penny in a slot marked "Light Brown"*). 'Ere goes, the oracle's working. (*The machine emits a coloured card.*) Listen to what it says about Aunt Maria. She is—"tender-'arted." Jest what I've always said of her! "A little 'asty in her temper"—'ullo, must be a 'itch in the machinery, *there!*—"neither obstinate nor 'aughty"—(*A snort from* AUNT MARIA *at this*)—"her inclination to love never unreasonable." 'Ow *like* her! "Frolicsome, inclined to flirt, and sometimes mischievous." You *giddy* little thing! Up to all your little tricks, this machine is! "Fertile in imagination, domesticated, thoughtful and persevering"—There's Aunt Maria for yer! . . .

GENERAL CHORUS. Good old Aunt Maria!

DOLPH. There's a prophecy on blue paper from *Napoleon's Book of Fate*, gratis. (*Reads.*) "Thy 'oroscope forewarns thee of a loss if thou lendest thy money." Just when I was going to borrow 'arf-a-crown off of her too!

AUNT MARIA. Ah, I didn't want no machine for *that*. 'Ow you can patronize such rubbidge, *I* don't know! Tellin' characters by the colour of your 'air, indeed—it's told *mine* all wrong, anyhow!

DOLPH. Well, you see, your 'air's so natural it would deceive *any* machine! [*Movement on part of* AUNT MARIA.

LOTTIE. Put in for 'Ector next, Dolph, do. I want to hear what it says about him.

DOLPH. They don't keep *his* colour in stock—afraid o' losing their insurance policy. "Red or orbun's" the nearest they can get to it. (*He puts in a penny in the "Red" slot.*) Here's old 'Ector. (*Reads.*) "The gentleman with long red hair is of a restless disposition, constantly roving." Keep your eye on him, Lottie! "Impatient and fiery in temper"—*'Old* 'im, two of yer?—"but for all that, is kind and loving." You *needn't* 'old him—it's all right. "He is passionately fond of the fair sex." What, *all* of 'em, 'Ector? I'm ashamed of yer! "He is inclined to timidity"—Qo'd ha' thought it?—"but by reflection may correct it and pass for a man of courage." You start reflecting at *once*, old chap!

'ECTOR (*ominously, to* LOTTIE). If Dolph don't mind what he's about, he'll go too far some day! [*He breathes hard, then thinks better of it.*

DOLPH. Now it's Carrie's turn. "Leave you out"? Couldn't think of it. Brown 'air, Carrie's is. (*He puts in a penny.*) "A lady with 'air of a medium brown colour, long and smooth"—*Is* your 'air long though, Carrie?

CARRIE (*with pride*). I should hope so—I can set on it.

DOLPH. That's nothing! So can Aunt Maria set on *hers!* (*With a glance at that lady's very candid "front."*) *Can't* you, auntie, eh? If you make an effort?

AUNT MARIA (*with dignity*). I'll thank you to have the goodness to drop your sauce, Mr. Adolphus Gaggs; it's out of place and not appreciated, I can assure you! [*She walks away.*

DOLPH (*surprised*). Why, there's Aunt Maria got the 'ump—for a little thing like *that!* Let me finish with Carrie. (*Reads.*) "She is of an intellectual turn of mind." ("*'Ear, 'ear!*" *from* FREDDY.) "Very fond of reading."—Takes in *Sloper's 'Alf 'Oliday* regular!—"Steadfast in her engagements." 'Ullo, Carrie!

CARRIE (*firing up*). Well, have you anything to say against that? You'd better take care, Mr. Gaggs!

DOLPH. I was only thinking. Sure you haven't been squaring this machine? Ah, it tells you some 'ome truths here—"Although inquisitive and fond of prying into the secrets of others——" Now however did it know *that?*

CARRIE. It isn't there—you're making it up!

[*She snatches the card, reads it, and tears it up.*

DOLPH. Temper—temper! Never mind. Now we'll try Freddy. What's his shade of 'air? I should say about the colour of spoilt 'ay, if I was asked.

CARRIE (*with temper*). You're *not* asked, so you needn't give your opinion!

DOLPH. Well, keep *your* 'air on, my dear girl, and we'll call Freddy's "Fair." (*Reading card.*) "A gentleman with this colour of hair will be assiduous in his occupation——"

CARRIE (*warmly*). What a shame! I'm *sure* he isn't. *Are* you, Freddy? [FREDDY *smiles vaguely.*

DOLPH. "Not given to rambling,"—Except in his 'ed,—"very moderate in his amorous wishes, his mind much given to reflection, inclined to be 'asty-tempered, and, when aroused,"—'Ere, somebody, rouse Freddy, quick!—"to use adjectives." Mustn't use 'em *'ere*, Freddy! "But if reasonably dealt with, is soon appeased." Pat his 'ed, Carrie, will yer? "Has plenty of bantering humour." (*Here* FREDDY *grins feebly.*) Don't he *look* it too! "Should study his diet." That means his grub, and he works 'ard enough at that! "He has a combination of good commercial talents, which, if directed according to the reflection of the sentiments, will make him tolerably well off in this world's goods."

CARRIE (*puzzled*). What's it torking about *now?*

DOLPH. Oh, it on'y means he's likely to do well in the cats'-meat line. Now for your fortune, Freddy. "It will be through marriage that your future will be brightened."

CARRIE (*pleased*). Lor, Freddy, think o' that!

DOLPH. Think *twice* of it, Freddy, my boy. Now we'll be off and get a drink.

CARRIE. Wait. We haven't got *your* character yet, Mr. Gaggs!

DOLPH. Oh, mine—they couldn't give that for a penny. Too good, yer know!

CARRIE. If they haven't got it, it's more likely they're afraid it would break the machine. I'm going to put in for you under "Black." (*She does.*) Here we are. (*Reads.*) "The gentleman will be much given to liquor." Found out first time, you see, Mr. Gaggs!

DOLPH (*annoyed*). Come, no personalities now. Drop all that!

CARRIE. "Somewhat quarrelsome and of an unsettled temper; more decorous and less attentive in his undertakings, and consequently meets with many disappointments. Such gentlemen"—now you listen to this, Mr. Gaggs!—"will now know their weaknesses, which should induce them to take steps to improve themselves." ("*'Ear, 'ear!*" *from the rest of the party.*) "Knowledge is power, and enables us to overcome many obstacles we otherwise should have fallen prey to." This is your fortune. "Thou art warned to be careful what thou drinkest!" Well, they do seem to *know* you, I must say!

DOLPH (*in a white rage*). I tell you what it is, Miss Carrie Bickerton, you appear to me to be turning a 'armless joke into a mejium for making nasty spiteful insinuations, and I, for one, am not going to put up with it, whatever others may! So, not being partial to being turned into redicule and made to look a fool in company, I'll leave you to spend the rest of the evening by yourselves, and wish you a very good night!

[*He turns majestically upon his heel and leaves the party stupefied.*

'ECTOR (*with mild regret*). It do seem a pity though, so pleasant as we were together, till this come up!

FREDDY. And Carrie's Aunt Maria gone off in a tantrum, too. We shall have a job to find *'er* now!

LOTTIE AND CARRIE. Oh, *do* hold your tongues, both of you. You and your automatic machines!

'ECTOR AND FREDDY. *Our* automatic machines! Why, we never——

LOTTIE AND CARRIE. If you say one word more, either of you, we'll go home! [FREDDY *and* 'ECTOR *follow them meekly in search of* AUNT MARIA *as the Scene closes in.*

"HAIR-CUTTING, SINGEING, AND SHAMPOOING."

(A SKETCH IN A HAIR-DRESSER'S SALOON.)

SCENE—*A small but well-appointed Saloon, with the usual fittings. As the Scene opens, its only occupants are a* LOQUACIOUS ASSISTANT *and a* CUSTOMER *with a more than ordinarily sympathetic manner.*

THE LOQUACIOUS ASSISTANT. No, sir, we're free to go the minute the clock strikes. We've no clearing up or anythink of *that* sort to do, not bein' required to pufform any duties of a *menial* nature, sir. 'Ed a little more to the left, sir . . . Sundays I gen'ally go up the river. I'm a Member of a Piskytorial Association. I don't do any fishin', to mention, but I jest carry a rod in my 'and. Railway Comp'ny takes anglers at reduced fares, you see, sir . . . No, sir, don't stay 'ere *all* day long. Sometimes the guv'nor sends me out to wait on parties at their own residences. Pleasant change, sir? Ah, you're right there, sir! There's one lady as lives in Prague Villas, sir. I've been to do *her* 'air many a time. (*He sighs sentimentally.*) I *did* like waitin' on *'er*, sir. Sech a beautiful woman she is, too,—with 'er face so white, ah! 'Awkins her name is, and her 'usban' a stockbroker. She was an actress once, sir, but she give that up when she married. Told me she'd 'ad to work 'ard all her life to support her ma, and she *did* think after she was married she was goin' to enjoy herself—but she *'adn't!* Ah, she *was* a nice lady, sir; she'd got her 'air in sech a tangle it took me three weeks to get it right! I showed her three noo ways of doin' up her 'air, and she says to me, "What a clever young man you are!" Her very words, sir! Trim the ends of your moustache, sir? Thankee, sir. Yes, she was a charmin' woman. She 'ad three parrots in the room with 'er, swearin' orful. I

enjoyed going there, sir; yes, sir. Ain't been for ever sech a while now, sir. I *did* think of callin' again and pertendin' I'd forgot a comb, sir, but I done that once, and I'm afraid it wouldn't do twice, *would* it, sir? Sixteen her number is—a sweet number, sir! Limewash or brilliantine, sir? . . . And I know 'er maid and her man, too; oh, she keeps a grand 'ouse, sir! (*Observing that the* SYMPATHETIC CUSTOMER *is gradually growing red in the face and getting hysterical.*) Towel too tight for you, sir? Allow me; thank you, sir. (*Here two fresh* CUSTOMERS *enter.*) Ready for you in one moment, gentlemen. The other assistant is downstairs 'aving his tea, but he'll be up directly.

[*The two fresh* CUSTOMERS *watch one another suspiciously, after the manner of Britons. The first, who is elderly, removes his hat and displays an abundance of strong grizzled hair, which he surveys complacently in a mirror. The second, a younger man, seems reluctant to uncover until absolutely obliged to do so.*

THE GRIZZLED CUSTOMER (*to the* OTHER CUSTOMER, *as his natural self-satisfaction overcomes his reserve*). 'Stonishing how fast one's hair does grow. It's not three weeks since I had a close crop. Great nuisance, eh?

THE OTHER CUSTOMER (*with evident embarrassment*). Er—oh, yes—quite so, I—I dare say.

[*He takes up a back number of "Punch," and reads the advertisements with deep interest. Meanwhile, the* LOQUACIOUS ASSISTANT *has bowed out the* SYMPATHETIC CUSTOMER, *and touched a bell. A* SATURNINE ASSISTANT *appears, still masticating bread-and-butter. The* SECOND CUSTOMER *removes his hat, revealing a denuded crown, and thereby causing surprise and a distinct increase of complacency in the* GRIZZLED GENTLEMAN, *who submits himself to the* LOQUACIOUS ASSISTANT. *The* BALD CUSTOMER *sinks resignedly into the chair indicated by the* SATURNINE OPERATOR, *feeling apologetic and conscious that he is not affording a fair scope for that gentleman's professional talent. The other Assistant appears to take a reflected pride in his subject.*

THE LOQ. ASS. (*to the* GRIZZLED CUSTOMER). Remarkable how some parties *do* keep their 'air, sir! Now yours—(*with a disparaging glance at the* BALD CUSTOMER'S *image in the mirror*)—yours grows quite remarkable strong. Do you *use* anythink for it now?

THE GR. C. Not I. Leave that to those who are not so well protected!

THE LOQ. ASS. I was on'y wondering if you'd been applying our Rosicrucian Stimulant, sir, that's all. There's the gentleman next door to here—a chemist, he is—and if you'll believe me, he was gettin' as bald as a robin, and he'd only tried it a fortnight when his 'ed come out all over brustles!

THE GR. C. Brussels what? *Sprouts*, eh?

THE LOQ. ASS. Hee-hee! no, sir; brustles like on a brush. But you can afford to 'ave *your* laugh, sir!

THE SAT. ASS. (*to the* BALD CUSTOMER, *with withering deference*). Much off, sir?

THE B. C. (*weakly thinking to propitiate by making light of his infirmity*). Well, there isn't much *on*, is there?

THE S. A. (*taking a mean advantage*). Well, sir, it wouldn't be a very long job numberin' all the 'airs on *your* 'ed, cert'nly! (*Severely, as one reproaching him for carelessness.*) You *'ave* been losin' your 'air! Puts me in mind of what the poet says in *'Amlet*—"Oh, what a fallin' off!" if you'll excuse *me*, sir!

THE B. C. (*with a sensitive squirm*). Oh, don't apologize—I'm *used* to it, you know!

THE S. A. Ah, sir, they do say the wind's tempered to the shorn lamb so as he can't see 'imself as others see 'im. But what *you* ought to 'ave is a little toopy. Make 'em so as you couldn't tell it from natural 'air now-a-days!

[*The* BALD CUSTOMER *feebly declines this meretricious adornment.*

THE LOQ. ASS. (*to his subject*). Know Mr. Paris Patterton of the Proscenium Theatre, sir? 'E's 'ad to call in our guv'nor, sir. 'Is 'air's comin' off, sir, dreadful, sir. The guv'nor's been tryin' a noo wash on his 'ed.

THE GR. C. Ha, poor beggar! Wash doing it any good?

THE LOQ. ASS. (*demurely*). That I can't tell you, sir; but it 'as a very agreeable perfume.

"YOU '*ave* BEEN LOSIN' YOUR 'AIR!"

THE S. A. I think I've taken off about as much as you can *spare*, sir!

THE GR. C. (*with a note of triumph*). Look here, you know, there's a lot more to come off here—won't be missed, eh?

THE LOQ. ASS. No, sir, you've an uncommon thick 'ed—of *'air*, I mean, of course!

THE S. A. If you'll take my advice, you'll 'ave yours singed, sir.

THE B. C. (*dejectedly*). Why, think it's any use?

THE S. A. No doubt of that, sir. Look at the way they singe a *'orse's* legs.

[*The* BALD CUSTOMER *yields, convinced by this argument.*

THE GR. C. No singeing or any nonsense of that sort for *me*, mind!

[*They are shampooed simultaneously.*

THE B. C. (*piteously, from his basin*). Th—that's c-cold enough, thanks!

THE GR. C. (*aggressively, from his*). Here, colder than *that*—as cold as you can make it—*I* don't care!

THE B. C. (*drying his face meekly on a towel*). A—a *hand*-brush, please, *not* the machine!

THE S. A. No, sir, machine-brush would about sweep all the 'air *off* your 'ed, sir!

THE GR. C. Machinery for me—and your hardest brush, do you hear?

THE S. A. } (*together, to their respective patients*). } Shall I put anything on your 'ed, sir?
THE LOQ. ASS. }

THE LOQ. ASS. Like anything on your 'air, sir?

THE B. C. (*hopelessly*). Oh, I don't know that it's much good!

THE S. A. Well, you may as well keep what little you *'ave* got, sir. Like to try our 'Irsutine Lotion, capital thing, sir. Known it answer in the most desprit cases. Keep it in 'alf-crown or three-and-sixpenny sizes. Can I 'ave the pleasure of puttin' you up a three-and-sixpenny one, sir? (*The* BALD CUSTOMER *musters up moral courage to decline, at which the* ASSISTANT *appears disgusted with him.*) No, sir? Much obliged, sir. Let me see—(*with a touch of sarcasm*)—you part your 'air a one side, I *think*, sir? Brush your 'at, sir? Thankee, sir. Pay at the counter, *if* you please. Shop—there!

THE LOQ. ASS. Think your 'air's as you like it now, sir? Like to look at yourself in a 'and-glass, sir? Thank you, sir.

[*The* BALD CUSTOMER *puts on his hat with relief, and instantly recovers his self-respect sufficiently to cast a defiant glare upon his rival, and walk out with dignity. The* GRIZZLED CUSTOMER, *after prolonged self-inspection, follows. The two* ASSISTANTS *are left alone.*

THE LOQ. ASS. Pretty proud of his 'air, that party, eh? Notice how I tumbled to him?

THE S. A. (*with superiority*). I *heard* you, o' course, but, as I'm always tellin' you, you don't do it *delicate* enough! When you've been in the profession as long as I have, and seen as much of human nature, you'll begin to understand how important it is to 'ave tact. Now you never 'eard *me* stoop to flattery nor yet over-familiarity—and yet you can see for yourself I manage without 'urting nobody's feelings—however bald! That's *tact*, that is!

THE MENAGERIE RACE.

SCENE—*The terrace in front of Hauberk Hall, which the* LARKSPURS *have taken for the summer.* TIME—*An August afternoon.* MISS STELLA LARKSPUR—*a young lady with great energy and a talent for organization—has insisted upon all the Guests taking part in a Menagerie Race.*

THE REV. NINIAN HEADNOTE (*the Local Curate—to* MR. PLUMLEY DUFF—*after uneasily regarding* MISS STELLA, *as she shakes up some pieces of folded paper in a hat*). Can you give me any idea of the precise nature of this amusement—er—nothing resembling a gambling transaction, I suppose?—or I really——

MR. PLUMLEY DUFF. Well, I'm given to understand that we shall each be expected to take an animal of some sort, and drive it along with a string tied to its leg. Sounds childish—to *me.*

THE CURATE (*relieved*). Oh, exactly, I see. Most entertaining, I'm sure! (*He coos.*) What wonderful ingenuity one sees in devising ever-fresh pastimes, do we not? Indeed yes!

MISS STELLA. There, I've shuffled all the animals now. (*Presenting the hat.*) Mr. Headnote, will you draw first?

THE CURATE. Oh, really. Am I to take one of these? Charmed! (*He draws.*) Now I wonder what my fate—— (*Opening the paper.*) The Monkey! (*His face falls.*) *Is* there a Monkey here? *Dear* me, how *very* interesting!

DICK GATLING (*of H.M.S. "Weasel"*). Brought him over my last cruise from Colombo. No end of a jolly little beast—bites like the—— like *blazes*, you know!

MISS STELLA (*to her cousin*). Now, Dick, I won't have you taking away poor Jacko's character like that. He's only bitten Binns—and,

well, there *was* the gardener's boy—but I'm sure he *teased* him. *You* won't tease him, will you, Mr. Headnote?

THE CURATE. I—I shouldn't dream of it, Miss Stella,—on the contrary, I—— (*To himself.*) Was it quite discreet to let myself be drawn into this? Shall I not risk lowering my office by publicly associating myself with a—a Monkey? I feel certain the Vicar would disapprove strongly.

DICK (*to* COLONEL KEMPTON). Drawn *your* animal yet, sir?

THE COLONEL (*heatedly*). Yes, I have—and I wish I'd kept out of this infernal tomfoolery. Why the mischief don't they leave a man in peace and quietness on a hot afternoon like this? Here am I, routed out of a comfortable seat to go and drive a confounded White Rabbit, sir! Idiotic, *I* call it!

THE CURATE. Pardon me, Colonel Kempton; but if you object to the Rabbit, I would not at all mind undertaking it myself—and you could take my Monkey——

THE COLONEL. Thanks—but I won't deprive you. A Rabbit is quite responsibility enough for me!

THE CURATE (*to himself, disappointed*). He's afraid of a poor harmless Monkey—and he an Army man, too! But I *don't* see why *I*——

MISS GUSSIE GRISSELL. Oh, Mr. Headnote, *isn't* it ridiculous! They've given me a Kitten! It makes me feel too absurdly young!

THE CURATE (*eagerly*). If you would prefer a—a more appropriate animal, there's a Monkey, which I am sure—— (*To himself, as* MISS G. *turns away indignantly.*) This Monkey doesn't seem very popular—there must be *some one* here who—I'll try the American lady—they are generally eccentric. (*To* MRS. HEBER K. BANGS.) I hope Fortune has been kind to you, Mrs. Bangs?

MRS. BANGS. Well, I don't know; there *are* quadrupeds that can trot faster over the measured mile than a Tortoise, and that's *my* animal.

THE CURATE (*with sympathy*). Dear me! That is a trial, indeed, for you! But if you would prefer something rather more exciting, I should be most happy, I'm sure, to exchange my Monkey——

DICK GATLING (*bustling up*). Hallo, what's that? No, no, Mrs.

Bangs—be true to your Tortoise. I tell you he's going to romp in—Æsop's tip, don't you know? I've backed you to win or a place. I say, what do you think *I've* drawn?—the Mutton! Just my luck!

"IT MAKES ME FEEL TOO ABSURDLY YOUNG!"

THE CURATE. Er—Mr. Gatling, just come this way a moment—I've a proposition to make; it's occurred to me that the Monkey would feel more—more at home with you, and, in short, I——

MR. PLUMLEY DUFF (*plaintively, to* MISS CYNTHIA CHAFFERS). I

shouldn't have minded any other animal—but to be paired off with a goose!

MISS CHAFFERS (*consolingly*). You're better off than *I* am, at all events—I've got a Puppy!

MR. DUFF. Have you? (*After a pause—sentimentally.*) Happy Puppy!

MISS C. He'll be anything but a happy Puppy if he doesn't win.

MR. DUFF. Oh, but he's sure to. I know I would, if *I* was your Puppy!

MISS C. I'm not so sure of that. Don't they lodge objections, or something, for boring?

MR. FANSHAWE. Can anybody inform me whether I'm expected to go and catch my Peacock? Because I'll be hanged if——

THE CURATE. Oh, Miss Stella, it's all right—Mr. Gatling thinks that it would be better if he undertook the Monkey himself; so we've arranged to——

MISS STELLA. Oh, nonsense, Dick! I can't have you taking advantage of Mr. Headnote's good-nature like that. What's the use of drawing lots at all if you don't keep to them? Of *course* Mr. Headnote will keep the Monkey.

(*The unfortunate* CURATE *accepts his lot with Christian resignation.*

DICK. Well, *that's* settled—but I say, Stella, where's my Mutton's moorings—and what's to be the course?

STELLA. The course is straight up the avenue from the lodge to the house, and I've told them to get all the beasts down there ready for us; so we'd better go at once.

THE START.

THE COMPETITORS. Stella, my dear, *mustn't* Miss Grissell tell her Kitten not to claw my Tortoise's head every time he pokes his poor nose out? It isn't fair, and it's damping all his enthusiasm! . . . Now, Colonel Kempton, it isn't the Puppy's fault—you *know* your Rabbit began it! . . . Hi, Stella, hold on a bit, my Mutton wants to lie down. Mayn't

I kick it up! . . . Duff, old chap, your Goose is dragging her anchor again, back her engines a bit, or there'll be a foul. . . . Miss Stella, I —I really *don't* think this Monkey is quite well—his teeth are chattering in such a *very* . . . All right, *padre*, only his nasty temper—jerk the beggar's chain. More than *that!*

CHORUS OF SPECTATORS AT LODGE GATES. My word, I wonder what next the gentry 'll be up to, I dew. Ain't Miss Stella orderin' of 'en about! Now she's started 'en. They ain't not allowed to go 'ittin' of 'en —got to go just wheeriver the animiles want. Lor, the guse is takin' *his* genlm'n in among the treeses! Well, if iver I did! That theer tartus gits along, don't he? Passon don't seem com'fable along o' that monkey. I'll back the young sailor gent—keeps that sheep wunnerful stiddy, he do. There's the hold peacock puttin' on a bust now. Well, well, these be fine doin's for 'Auberk 'All, and no mistake. Make old Sir Halberd stare if he was 'ere (*&c., &c.*).

THE COLONEL (*wrathfully to his Rabbit, which will do nothing but run round and round him*). Stop that, will you, you little fool? Do you want to trip me up? Of all the dashed nonsense I ever——!

MRS. BANGS. My! Colonel, you do seem to have got hold of a pretty insubordinate kind of a Rabbit, too!

THE COLONEL (*looking round*). Well, you aren't getting much pace out of your Tortoise either, if it comes to that!

MRS. BANGS. He puts in most of his time in stoppages for rest and refreshment. I'm beginning to believe that old fable's a fraud. Anyway, it's my opinion this Tortoise isn't going to beat any hare—unless it's a jugged one.

DICK GATLING (*in front, as his Sheep halts to crop the turf in a leisurely manner*). We've not pulled up—only lying-to to take in supplies. We're going ahead directly. There, what did I tell you? Now she's tacking!

THE CURATE (*in the rear*). Poo' little Jacko, then—there, there, quietly now! Miss Stella, what does it mean when it gibbers like that? (*Sotto voce.*) I wonder, if I let go the chain——

MR. DUFF (*hauling his Goose towards* MISS CHAFFERS). It's no use —*I* can't keep this beast from bolting off the course!

MISS C. Do keep it away from my Puppy, at all events. I *know* it will peck him, and he's perfectly happy licking my shoe—he's found out there's sugar-candy in the varnish.

MR. DUFF (*solemnly*). Yes, but I *say*, you know—that's all very well, but it's not making him *race*, is it? Now I *am* getting some running out of my Goose.

MISS C. Rather in-and-out-running, isn't it? (*Cries of distress from the rear.*) But what is the matter now? That poor dear curate again!

THE CURATE (*in agony*). Here, I say, somebody! *do* help me! Miss Stella, do speak to your monkey, please! It's jumped on my back, and it's pulling my hair—'ow!

[*Most of the competitors abandon their animals and rush to the rescue.*

DICK GATLING (*coming up later*). Why on earth did you all jack up like that? You've missed a splendid finish! My Mutton was forging ahead like fun, when Fanshawe's Peacock hoisted his sail, and drew alongside, and it was neck and neck. Only, as he had more neck than the Mutton, and stuck it out, he won by a beak. Look here, let's have it all over again!

[*But the Monkey being up a tree, and the* COLONEL *having surreptitiously got rid of his Rabbit among the bracken, and the Tortoise having retired within his shell and firmly declined to come out again, sport is abandoned for the afternoon, to the scarcely-disguised relief of the* CURATE, *who is prevented from remaining to tea by the pressure of parish work.*

BEFORE THE MECHANICAL MODELS.

(A SKETCH AT THE ROYAL NAVAL EXHIBITION.)

SCENE—*The Grounds. A string of Sightseers discovered passing slowly in front of a row of glazed cases containing small mechanical figures, which are set in motion in the usual manner.*

BEFORE A SCENE REPRESENTING A DYING CHILD.

A GALLANT SWAIN. That's the kid in bed, yer see. Like to see it die, Polly, eh? A penny does it.

POLLY (*with a giggle*). Well, if it ain't *too* 'arrowing. (*The penny is dropped in, and the mechanical mother is instantly agitated by the deepest maternal anxiety.*) That's the mother kneeling by the bed, I suppose—she do pray natural. There's the child waking up—see, it's moving its 'ed. (*The little doll raises itself in bed, and then falls back lifeless.*) Ah, it's gone—look at the poor mother 'idin' her face.

THE G. S. Well, it's all over. Come along and see something more cheerful.

POLLY. Wait a bit—it isn't 'alf over yet. There's a angel got to come and carry her away fust—there, the door's opening, that'll be the angel come for it, I expect. (*Disappointed.*) No, it's only the doctor. (*A jerky and obviously incompetent little medical practitioner puts his head in at the door, and on being motioned back by the bereaved mother, retires with more delicacy than might have been expected from mere machinery.*) Well, he might ha' seen for himself if the child *was* dead! (*The back of the bed disappears, disclosing a well-known picture of an angel flying upwards with a child.*) I did think they'd have a real angel, and not

only a picture of one, and any one can see it's a different child—there's the child in bed just the same. I call that a take-in!

THE G. S. I dunno what more you expect for a penny.

A PERSON ON THE OUTSKIRTS (*eagerly to* FRIEND). What happened? What is it? I couldn't make it out over all the people's shoulders?

HIS FRIEND. Dying child—not half bad either. You go and put in a penny, and you'll see it well enough.

THE P. ON THE O. (*indignantly*). What, put in a penny for such rubbish? Not me!

[*He hangs about till some one else provides the necessary coin.*

A SOFT-HEARTED FEMALE. No, I couldn't stand there and look on. I never *can* bear them pathetic subjects. I felt just the same with that picture of the Sick Child at the Academy, you know. (*Meditatively.*) And you don't have to put a penny in for *that*, either.

BEFORE ANOTHER BEDROOM SCENE, REPRESENTING "THE DRUNKARD'S DELIRIUM."

FIRST WOMAN. That's 'im in bed, with the bottle in his 'and. He likes to take his liquor comfortable, *he* do.

SECOND WOMAN. He's very neat and tidy, considerin', ain't he? I wonder what his delirium is like. 'Ere, Rosy, come and put your penny in as the gentleman give yer. (ROSY, *aged six, sacrifices her penny, under protest.*) Now, you look—you can't think what pretty things you'll see.

[*The little wooden drunkard sits up, applies the bottle to his mouth, and sinks back contentedly; a demon, painted a pleasing blue, rises slowly by his bedside; the drunkard takes a languid interest in him; the demon sinks.*

A GENTLEMAN WITH A BLOATED COMPLEXION (*critically*). 'Ooever did that—well, I dessay he's a very clever man, but—(*compassionately*)—he don't know much about 'orrors, *he* don't!

A FACETIOUS FRIEND. *You* could ha' told him a thing or two, eh, Jim?

THE BLOATED GENTLEMAN (*contemptuously*). Well, if I never 'ad them wuss than *that!*

[*A small skeleton, in a shroud, looks in at the door.*

THE F. F. 'Ullo, 'ere's the King o' Terrors for yer! (ROSY *shows signs of uneasiness; a pink demon comes out of a cupboard.*) 'Ere's another of 'em—quite a little party he's 'aving!

A GENTLEMAN IN A WHITE TIE (*as the machinery stops*). Well, a thing like this does more real good than many a temperance tract.

THE BLOATED G. Yer right there, guv'nor—it's bin a lesson to *me*, I know that. 'Ere, will you come and 'ave a whisky-sour along of me and my friend 'ere?

BEFORE A MODEL REPRESENTING AN EXECUTION.

A DAUGHTER. But *why* won't you put a penny into this one, father?

THE FATHER (*firmly*). Because I don't approve of Capital Punishment, my dear.

A CULTIVATED PERSON. An execution—"put a penny in; bell tolls—gates open—scaffold shown with gallows. Executioner pulls bolt—black flag"—dear, dear—most degrading, shocking taste! (*To his Friend.*) Oh, of course, I'll wait, if you want to see it—not got a penny? Let me see—yes, *I* can lend you one. (*He does; the penny is put in—nothing happens.*) Out of order, I suppose—scandalous! and nobody to speak to about it—*most* discreditable! Stop—what's this? (*A sort of woolly beat is audible inside the prison; the* C. P. *beams.*) That's the bell tolling—it's all right, it's working! [*It works.*

ANOTHER SPECTATOR. Very well done, that was—but they 'urried it over a little too quick. I scarcely saw the man 'ung at all!

HIS COMPANION. Put in another penny, and p'raps you'll see him cut down, old chap.

BEFORE THE FAIRY FORTUNE-TELLER'S GROTTO.

SUSAN JANE (*to her* SOLDIER). Oh, ain't that pretty? I should like to know what *my* fortune is. [*She feels in her pocket.*

THE SOLDIER (*who disapproves of useless expenditure*). Ain't you put in enough bloomin' pennies?

SUSAN JANE. This is the last. (*Reads directions.*) Oh, you've got to set the finger on the dial to the question you want answered, and then put your penny in. What shall I ask her?

SOLDIER. Any one would think you meant to go by the answer, to hear you talk!

SUSAN JANE. P'raps I do. (*Coquettishly, as she sets the index to a printed question.*) Now, you mustn't look. I won't 'ave *you* see what I ask!

SOLDIER (*loftily*). *I* don't want to look, I tell yer—it's nothing to me.

SUSAN JANE. But you *are* looking—I saw you.

[*A curious and deeply-interested crowd collects around them.*

SOLDIER. Honour bright, I ain't seen nothing. Are you going to be all night over this 'ere tomfoolery?

[SUSAN JANE *puts in a penny, blushing and tittering; a faint musical tinkle is heard from the case, and the little fairies begin to revolve in a solemn and mystic fashion; growing excitement of crowd. A pasteboard bower falls aside, revealing a small disc on which a sentence is inscribed.*

PERSON IN CROWD (*reading slowly over* SUSAN JANE'S *shoulder*). "Yus; 'e is treuly worthy of your love."

CROWD (*delighted*). That's worth a penny to know, *ain't* it, miss? *Your* mind's easy now! It's the soldier she was meanin'. Ah, *'e* ought to feel satisfied too, after that! (*&c., &c.*)

[*Confusion of* SUSAN JANE.

SOLDIER (*as he departs with* S. J.). Well, yer know, there's something *in* these things, when all's said!

IN DEPARTING.

A PLEASED PLEASURE-SEEKER. Ah, that's something like, that is! I've seen the 'Aunted Miser, and the Man with the 'Orrors, and a Execution, and a Dyin' Child—they do make you *larf*, yer know!

SECOND P. P. Yes, it's a pity the rest o' the Exhibition ain't more the same style, to my thinking!

A CAPTIOUS CRITIC. Well, they don't seem to me to 'ave much to do with anything *naval.*

HIS COMPANION. Why, it comes under machinery, don't it? You're so bloomin' particular, you are! Wouldn't touch a glass o' beer 'ere, unless it was brewed with salt-water, I suppose! Well, come on, then—there's a bar 'andy! [*They adjourn for refreshment.*

AT THE WILD WEST.

(A SKETCH AT EARL'S COURT.)

THE ORATOR'S OPENING DISCOURSE (*as heard in the back rows*). Ladies and gentlemen, I desire to draw your attention to an important fact. It will be my pleasure to introduce to you. . . . ("*The real American popcorn, equally famous in Paris and London, tuppence each packet!*" *from Vendor in gangway*) . . . history and life of the . . . ("'*Buffalo Bill Puzzle,' one penny!*" *from another vendor behind*) . . . impress one fact upon your minds; this is not . . . (*roar and rattle of passing train*) . . . in the ordinary or common acceptation of . . . ("*Puff-puff-puff!*" *from engine shunting trucks*) . . . Many unthinking persons have said. . . . (*Piercing and prolonged scream from same engine.*) This is not so. On the contrary . . . (*Metallic bangs from trucks.*) Men and animals are . . . ("*Programmes! Opera glasses on hire!*") . . . purely the creatures of. . . .

[*Remainder of remarks hopelessly lost amidst the clank of coupling chains, whistles, snorts, and puffs from shunting engine.*

AN OLD LADY IN AUDIENCE. He has such a beautiful clear voice, we *ought* to hear every word. If *I* were Buffalo Bill, I should positively insist on the trains keeping quiet while the orator was speaking.

ORATOR (*during the Grand Processional Review*). A Troop of Arapahoe Indians!

[*Band strikes up; a party of painted Indians gallop into arena, uttering little puppy-like barks.*

AN ARTISTIC LADY (*shuddering*). Look at that creature with a raw pink body, and a pea-green face—it's too *frightful*, and such *crude*

yellows! I *wish* they could be taught to paint themselves some *decent* colour!

HER SISTER. Really, dear, as far as *decency* is concerned, I don't exactly see what difference the mere *colour* would make.

HER HUSBAND. That isn't quite what Emily meant. She'd like to enamel 'em all in Art shades and drape Liberty scarves round 'em, like terra-cotta drainpipes or wicker-chairs—eh, Emily?

EMILY (*loftily*). Oh, my dear Henry, I wasn't speaking to *you*. I know what a contempt you have for all that makes a home beautiful!

HENRY. Meaning Indians? My love, I respect them and admire them—at a distance; but, plain *or* coloured, I cannot admit that they would be decorative as furniture—even in *your* drawing-room!

[EMILY *endures him in silence.*

ORATOR. A party of women of the Ogallalla Tribe!

[*Three mounted Indian ladies in blankets—walk their horses slowly round the arena, crooning "Aye-eia-ha-ya-hee-hi-ya!" with every sign of enjoying their own performance.*

A POETICAL LADY. What strange wild singing it is, John! There's something so creepy about it, somehow.

JOHN (*a prosaic but frivolous person*). There is, indeed. It explains *one* thing I never quite understood before, though.

THE POETICAL LADY. I thought it would impress you—but what does it explain?

JOHN. The reason why the buffalo in those parts has so entirely died out.

A RIGID MATRON (*during the Emigrant Train Scene*). I don't care to see a girl ride in that bold way myself. I'm sure it *must* be so unsexing for them. And what *is* she about now, with that man? They're actually having a duel with knives—on *horseback* too! not at *all* a nice thing for any young girl to do. There! she's pulled out a pistol and shot him—and galloped off as if nothing had happened! I have always heard that American girls were allowed a good *deal* of liberty—but I'd really no idea they went as far as this! I should be sorry indeed to see any girl of *mine* (*here she glances instructively at three dumpy and dough-*

faced daughters) acting in that forward and *most* unfeminine manner. (*Reassuringly.*) But I'm very sure there's no fear of *that*, is there, dears?

[*The daughters repudiate with gratifying unanimity any desire to shoot strange gentlemen on horseback.*

A BLOODTHIRSTY BOY (*as the hostile Indians attack the train*). Will the Indians *scalp* anybody, uncle?

HIS UNCLE. No, my boy, they don't let 'em get near enough for that, you see! [*The Indians are ignominiously chased off by Cowboys.*

THE BOY (*disappointed*). They'd a splendid chance of scalping the Orator that time—and not one of them even saw it!

ORATOR. Captain Jack Burtz, of the United States Army, will now give you an example of his phenomenal Lightning Drill.

[*The Captain takes up his position with an air of fierce resolution, and proceeds to do wonderful things with a rifle and fixed bayonet, which he treats with a familiarity bordering on contempt.*

A LADY (*to a* MILITARY FRIEND—*as the Captain twirls the rifle rapidly round his neck*). Have you ever seen any one drill like that before?

THE MIL. F. Saw Cinquevalli do something very like it at the Empire. But *he* had a cannon-ball as well.

THE LADY. Look at him now—he's making the gun revolve upside down with the bayonet on the palm of his hand! Could *you* do that drill?

THE MIL. F. Not without drilling a hole in myself.

THE LADY. It really is wonderful that he shouldn't feel the point, isn't it now?

THE MIL. F. Well, I don't see much point *in* it myself—but so long as it amuses him, I dare say it's all right.

[*The Captain discharges the gun in the air and retires at the double, feeling that his country's safety is secure for the present.* JOHNNY BAKER, *the young American marksman, appears and exhibits his skill in shooting upside down.*

THE RIGID MATRON. He missed one that time—he's not quite such a good shot as the girl was.

ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS. Oh, but, mother, you forget! Miss Annie Oakley didn't stand on *her*——

"I AM PERFECTLY AWARE OF *that*, EUPHEMIA!"

THE R. M. (*in an awful voice*). I am perfectly aware of *that*, Euphemia; so pray don't make such unnecessary remarks!

[EUPHEMIA *subsides in confusion.*

AN UNSOPHISTICATED SPECTATOR (*as* MASTER BAKER, *after rubbing his forehead, discovers a brickbat under the mat where his head had been*). Now, how *very* odd! He found a brick in exactly the same place

when I was here before! Some one must have a grudge against him, poor boy! But he ought to look *before* he stands on his head, next time!

MR. TIMMERMAN (*carelessly, to his wife, as the Deadwood Coach is introduced*). It would be rather fun to have a ride in the coach—new experience and all that.

MRS. T. (*who doesn't intend him to go*). Oh, do be *careful* then.

MR. T. (*feeling quite the daredevil*). Pooh, my dear, what is there to be careful about?

MRS. T. It does look such a ramshackle old thing—it might break down. Accidents do happen so quickly.

MR. T. (*reflecting that they certainly do*). Oh, if it wasn't perfectly safe, they wouldn't——

MRS. T. Well, promise me if you go on the box to hold on tight round the corners, then!

MR. T. (*who doesn't see much to hold on by*). I shan't *go* on the box —I shall go inside.

MRS. T. There mayn't be room. There are several people waiting to go already. You'll have to make haste to get a seat at all. I shall be *miserable* till I see you safe back again!

MR. T. (*who is not sure he doesn't share her feelings*). Oh, well, if you feel like *that* about it, I won't——

MRS. T. Oh, yes, do, I *want* you to go—it will be so exciting for you to see real Indians yelling and shooting all round.

MR. T. (*thinking that it may be more exciting than pleasant*). Might bring on one of my headaches, and there'll be such a smell of gunpowder too. I hardly think, after all, it's worth while.

MRS. T. If you feel in the least *nervous* about it. (MR. T. *denies this indignantly.*) Then go at once—you may never have the chance again; only don't stay talking about it—go!

MR. T. (*pulling himself together*). Very well, if you really wish it. . . . Confound it! *Most* annoying, really! (*Sits down relieved.*) They've started! It's all *your* fault,—if you hadn't kept me here talking!

MRS. T. (*humbly*). I *am* so sorry—but there's another performance in the evening; we might dine here, and then you could easily go on the coach afterwards, if you're so anxious to!

MR. T. And sit through the show twice in one day? No, good as it is, I really—and I've some letters I must write after dinner, too.

[MRS. T. *smiles to herself discreetly, satisfied at having gained her point.*

TELEPHONIC THEATRE-GOERS.

(A SKETCH AT THE ELECTRICAL EXHIBITION AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.)

SCENE—*The Exterior of the Telephone Music-Room in the Egyptian Vestibule. The time is about eight. A placard announces, "Manchester Theatre now on"; inside the wickets a small crowd is waiting for the door to be opened. A* CAUTIOUS MAN *comes up to the turnstile with the air of a fox examining a trap.*

THE CAUTIOUS MAN (*to the* COMMISSIONNAIRE). How long can I stay in for sixpence?

THE COMMISSIONNAIRE. Ten minutes, sir.

THE C. M. Only ten minutes, eh? But, look here, how do I know there'll be anything going on while I'm *in* there?

COMM. You'll find out that from the instruments, sir.

THE C. M. Ah, I dare say—but what *I* mean is, suppose there's nothing *to hear*—between the acts and all that?

COMM. Comp'ny guarantees there's a performance on while you're in the room, sir.

THE C. M. Yes, but all these other people waiting to get in—how'm I to know I shall get a *place?*

COMM. (*outraged*). Look 'ere, sir, we're the National Telephone Comp'ny, with a reputation to lose, and if you've any ideer we want to swindle you, all I can tell *you* is—stop outside!

THE C. M. (*suddenly subdued*). Oh—er—all right, thought I'd make sure *first*, you know. Sixpence, isn't it?

[*He passes into the enclosure, and joins the crowd.*

A COMIC MAN (*in an undertone to his fiancée*). That's a careful bloke,

that is. Know the *value* o' money, *he* does. It'll have to be a precious scientific sort o' telephone that takes *'im* in. He'll 'ave *his* sixpennorth, if it bursts the machine! Hullo, they're letting us in now.

[*The door is slightly opened from within, causing an expectant movement in crowd—the door is closed again.*

A SUPERIOR YOUNG LADY (*to her* ADMIRER). I just caught a glimpse of the people inside. They were all sitting holding things like opera-glasses up to their ears—they did look so ridiculous!

HER ADMIRER. Well, it's about time they gave *us* a chance of looking ridiculous, their ten minutes must be up now. I've been trying to think what this put me in mind of. *I* know. Waiting outside the Pit doors! doesn't it you?

THE SUP. Y. L. (*languidly, for the benefit of the bystanders*). Do they make you wait like this for the Pit?

HER ADMIRER. *Do they make you wait?* Why, weren't you and I three-quarters of an hour getting into the Adelphi the other evening?

THE SUP. Y. L. (*annoyed with him*). I don't see any necessity to bawl it out like that, if we *were*.

[*The discreetly-curtained windows are thrown back, revealing persons inside reluctantly tearing themselves away from their telephones. As the door opens, there is a frantic rush to get places.*

AN ATTENDANT (*soothingly*). Don't crush, ladies and gentlemen—plenty of room for all. Take your time!

[*The crowd stream in, and pounce eagerly on chairs and telephones; the usual* FUSSY FAMILY *waste precious minutes in trying to get seats together, and get separated in the end. Undecided persons flit from one side to another. Gradually they all settle down, and stop their ears with the telephone-tubes, the prevailing expression being one of anxiety, combined with conscious and apologetic imbecility. Nervous people catch the eye of complete strangers across the table, and are seized with suppressed giggles. An* IRRITABLE PERSON *finds himself between the* COMIC MAN *and a* CHATTY OLD GENTLEMAN.

THE COMIC MAN (*to his fiancée, putting the tube to his ear*). Can't get *my* telephone to tork yet! (*Shakes it.*) *I'll* wake 'em up! (*Puts the other tube to his mouth.*) Hallo—hallo! are you there? Look alive with that show o' yours, guv'nor—we ain't got long to stop! (*Pretends to listen, and reply.*) If you give me any of your cheek, I'll come down and punch your 'ead! (*Applies a tube to his eye.*) All right, Polly, they've *begun*—I can see the 'ero's legs!

POLLY. Be quiet, can't you? I can't hold the tubes steady if you will keep making me laugh so. (*Listening.*) Oh, Alf, I can hear singing—can't you? Isn't it lovely?

THE COM. M. It seems to me there's a bluebottle, or something, got inside mine—I can 'ear *'im!*

THE IRR. P. (*angrily, to himself*). How the deuce do they expect—and that infernal organ in the nave has just started booming again—they ought to send out and stop it!

THE CHATTY O. G. (*touching his elbow*). I beg your pardon, sir, but can you inform me what opera it is they're performing at Manchester? The *prima donna* seems to be just finishing a song. Wonderful how one can hear it all!

THE IRR. P. (*snapping*). Very wonderful indeed, under the circumstances! (*He corks both ears with the tubes.*) It's too bad—now there's a confounded string band beginning outs—— (*Removes the tube.*) Eh, what? (*More angrily than ever.*) Why, it's *in* the blanked thing! (*He fumbles with the tubes in trying to readjust them. At last he succeeds, and, after listening intently, is rewarded by hearing a muffled and ghostly voice, apparently from the bowels of the earth, say*—"Ha, say you so? Then am I indeed the hooshiest hearsher in the whole of Mumble-land!")

THE CHATTY O. G. (*nudging him*). How very distinctly you hear the dialogue, sir, don't you?

[*The* IRRITABLE PERSON, *without removing the tubes, turns and glares at him savagely, without producing the slightest impression.*

ANOTHER GHOSTLY VOICE (*very audibly*). "The devil you do!"

A CAREFUL MOTHER. Minnie, put them down at *once*, do you hear? I can't have you listening to such language.

MINNIE. Why, it's only at Manchester, mother!

GHOSTLY VOICES AND SOUNDS (*as they reach the* IRRITABLE PERSON). "You cursed scoundrel! So it was you who burstled the billiboom, was

"HOW VERY DISTINCTLY YOU HEAR THE DIALOGUE, SIR, DON'T YOU?"

it? Stand back, there, I'll hork every gordle in his ——!" (. . . *Sounds of a scuffle . . . A loud female scream, and firing . . .*) "What have you done?"

THE CH. O. G. Have you any sort of idea what he *has* done, sir?

[*To the* IRRITABLE PERSON.

THE IRR. P. No, sir, and I'm not likely to have as long as——

[*He listens with fierce determination.*

FIRST GHOSTLY VOICE. "Stop! Hear me—I can explain everything!"

SECOND DO. DO. "I will hear *nothing*, I tell you!"

FIRST DO. DO. "You shall—you *must!* Listen. I am the only surviving mumble of your unshle groolier."

THE CH. O. G. (*as before*). I think it must be a Melodrama and not an Opera after all—from the language!

AN INNOCENT MATRON (*who is listening, with her eyes devoutly fixed on the libretto of "The Mountebanks," under the firm conviction that she is in direct communication with the Lyric Theatre*). I always understood *The Mountebanks* was a *musical* piece, my dear, didn't you? and even as it is, they don't seem to keep very close to the words, as far as I can follow!

GHOSTLY VOICES (*in the* IRRITABLE PERSON'S *ear as before*). "Your *wife?*" "Yes, my wife, and the only woman in the world I ever loved!"

THE IRR. P. (*pleased, to himself*). Come, now I'm getting accustomed to it, I can hear capitally!

THE VOICES. "Then why have you——? . . . I will tell you all. Twenty-five years ago, when a shinder foodle in the Borjeezlers, I——"

A STILL SMALL VOICE (*in everybody's ear*). TIME, PLEASE.

EVERYBODY (*dropping the tubes, startled*). Where did *that* come from?

THE COM. M. They've been and cut it off at the main—just when it was getting interesting!

HIS FIANCÉE. Well, I can't say I made out much of the plot myself.

THE COM. M. I made out enough to cover a sixpence, anyhow. You didn't expect the telephone to explain it all to you goin' along, and give you cawfee between the acts, did you?

THE CH. O. G. (*sidling affably up to the* IRRITABLE PERSON *as he is moving out*). Marvellous strides science has made of late, sir! Almost incredible. I declare to *you*, while I was sitting there, I positively felt inclined to ask myself the question——

THE IRR. P. Allow me to say, sir, that another time, if you will obey that inclination, and put the question to yourself instead of other people,

you will be a more desirable neighbour in a Telephone-Room than I confess I found you! [*He turns on his heel, indignantly.*

THE CH. O. G. (*to himself*). 'Strordinary what unsociable people one *does* come across at times! Now I'm always ready to talk to anybody, I am—don't care *who* they are. Well—well——

[*He walks on, musing.*

ART IN THE CITY.

(A SKETCH IN THE CORPORATION GALLERY AT THE GUILDHALL.)

The Gallery is crowded, and there is the peculiar buzz in the air that denotes popular interest and curiosity. The majority of the visitors are of the feminine sex, and appear to have come up from semi-detached villas in the less fashionable suburbs; but there is also a sprinkling of smart and Superior Persons, prosperous City Merchants, who regard pictures with respect, as a paying investment, young Commercial Men, whose feeling for Art is not precisely passionate, but who have turned in to pass the time, and because the Exhibition is gratuitous, earnest Youths with long hair, soft hats, and caped ulsters, &c., &c.

BEFORE DELAROCHE'S "DROWNED MARTYR."

FIRST VILLA RESIDENT (*appreciatively*). Such a *death-like* expression, isn't it?

SECOND DITTO DITTO. Yes, *indeed!* And *how* beautifully her halo's done!

THIRD DITTO DITTO. Will those two men on the bank be the executioners, should you think?

FOURTH DITTO DITTO (*doubtfully*). It says in the Catalogue that they're two Christians.

AN INTELLIGENT CHILD. Then why don't they jump in and pull her out, mother? [*The child is reproved.*

A LANGUID YOUNG LADY. Is that intended for *Opheliah?*

[*The rest regard her with shocked disapproval, mingled with pity, before passing on.*

BEFORE HOLL'S "FATHERLESS FAMILY."

FIRST MATTER-OF-FACT PERSON. They're just come back from the funeral, I *expect.*

EARNEST YOUTHS WITH LONG HAIR.

SECOND DITTO DITTO. I shouldn't wonder. (*Feels bound to show*

that she too can be observant.) Yes, they're all in mourning—even the servant. Do you see the black ribbon in her cap? I *do* like that.

AN IRRELEVANT PERSON. It's just a *little* melancholy, though, don't you think?—which reminds me—*how* much did you say that jet trimming was a yard—ninepence three-farthings?

HER FRIEND. Ninepence halfpenny at the shop in St. Paul's Churchyard. The child has her frock open at the top behind, you see—evidently a *poor* family!

THE I. P. Yes, and the work-basket with the reels of cotton and all. (*Looking suddenly down.*) Don't you call this a handsome carpet?

A FRIVOLOUS FRENCHMAN (*fresh from "The Casual Ward" and "The Martyr," to his companion*). Tenez, mon cher, encore des choses gaies! [*He passes on with a shrug.*

A GOOD YOUNG MAN (*with a train of three Maiden Aunts in tow, halting them before a picture of Sir J. Noel Paton's*). Now you ought to look at this one.

[*They inspect it with docility. It represents a Knight in Armour riding through a forest and surrounded by seductive Wood-nymphs.*

FIRST MAIDEN AUNT. Is that a guitar one of those girls is playing, or what?

SECOND DITTO DITTO. A mandolin more likely; it looks like mother-o'-pearl—is it supposed to be King Arthur, and are they fairies or angels, Robert?

THE G. Y. M. (*a little at sea himself*). "*Oskold and the Ellé-maids*," the *title* is.

THIRD AUNT. Scolding the Elements! *Who's* scolding them, Robert?

ROBERT (*in her ear*). "*Oskold and the Ellé*-maids!" it's a *Scandinavian* legend, Aunt Tabitha.

AUNT TABITHA (*severely*). Then it's a pity they can't find better subjects to paint, in *my* opinion! (*They move on to Mr. Pettie's "Musician."*) Dear me, that young man looks dreadfully poorly, to be sure!

ROBERT (*loudly*). He's not *poorly*, aunt; he's a *musician*—he's supposed to be (*quoting from Catalogue*) "thinking out a composition, imagining an orchestral effect, with the occasional help of an organ."

FIRST AUNT. I see the organ plain enough—but where's the orchestral effect?

ROBERT. Well, you *wouldn't* see that, you know, he only *imagines* it.

SECOND AUNT. Oh, yes, I *see*. Subject to *delusions*, poor man! I *thought* he looked as if he wanted some one to look after him.

FIRST LOYAL OLD LADY (*reading from Catalogue*). "No. 35. Lent by Her Majesty the Queen."

SECOND DITTO DITTO. Lent by Her Majesty, my dear! Oh, I don't want to miss *that*—which is it—where?

[*She prepares herself to regard it with a special and reverent interest.*

AMONG THE PRE-RAPHAELITE PAINTERS.

MATTER-OF-FACT PERSON (*to her* IRRELEVANT FRIEND). Here's a Millais, you see. Ophelia drowning herself.

THE IRRELEVANT FRIEND (*who doesn't approve of suicide*). Yes, dear, very peculiar—but I don't quite *like* it, I must say. Do you remember whether I told Sarah to put out the fiddle-pattern forks and the best cruet-stand before I came away? Dear Mr. Homerton is coming in to supper to-night, and I want everything to be *nice* for him.

THE GOOD YOUNG MAN. There's Ophelia *again*, you see. (*Searches for an appropriate remark.*) She—ah—evidently understood the art of natation.

FIRST AUNT. She looks almost too *comfortable* in the water, *I* think. Her mouth's open, as if she was singing.

SECOND AUNT (*extenuatingly*). Yes—but those wild roses are very naturally done—and so are her teeth.

A DISCRIMINATING PERSON. I like it all but the *figure*.

A WELL-INFORMED PERSON. There's the "*Dream of Dante*," d'ye see? No mistaking the figure of Dante. Here he is, down below, *having* his dream—that's the dream in that cloud—and up above you get the dream done life-size—queer sort of idea, isn't it?

A PONDEROUS PERSON (*finding himself in front of "The Vale of Rest"*). Ha!—what are those two nuns up to?

HIS COMPANION. Digging their own graves, I think.

THE POND. P. (*with a supreme mental effort*). Oh, *Cremation*, eh?

[*Goes out, conceiving that he has sacrificed at the shrine of Art sufficiently for one afternoon.*

YOUNG DISCOUNT (*to* YOUNG TURNOVER—*before "Claudio and Isabella"*). Something out of Shakespeare here, you see.

YOUNG TURNOVER. Yairss. (*Giving Claudio a perfunctory attention.*) Wants his hair raking, don't he? Not much in *my* line, this sort of subject.

YOUNG DISC. Nor yet mine—takes too much time making it *out*, y'know. *This* ain't bad—"*Venetian Washerwomen*"—is that the way they get up linen over there?

YOUNG TURN. (*who has "done" Italy*). Pretty much. (*By way of excuse for them.*) They're very *al fresco* out in those parts, y'know. Here's a market-place in Italy, next to it. Yes, that's just like they are. They bring out all those old umbrellas and stalls and baskets twice a week, and clear 'em all off again next day, so that you'd hardly know they'd *been* there!

YOUNG DISC. (*intelligently*). I see. After Yarmouth style.

YOUNG TURN. Well, *something* that way—only rather different *style*, y' know.

BEFORE "THE HUGUENOT."

AN APPRECIATIVE LADY. Ah! yes, it is wonderfully painted! *Isn't* it lovely the way that figured silk is done? You can hardly tell it isn't real, and the plush coat he's wearing; such an exquisite shade of violet, and the ivy-leaves, and the nasturtiums and the old red brick; yes, it's *very* beautiful—and *yet*, do you know (*meditatively*), I almost think it's prettier in the *engravings!*

BEFORE THE BURNE-JONESES.

A FIANCÉ. This is the "*Wheel of Fortune*," Emily, you see. (*Reads.*) "Sad, but inexorable, the fateful figure turns the wheel. The

sceptred King, once uppermost, is now beneath his Slave. . . . while beneath the King is seen the laurelled head of the Poet."

HIS FIANCÉE (*who would be charming if she would not try—against Nature—to be funny*). It's a kind of giddy-go-round then, I suppose; or is it Burne-Jones's idea of a revolution—don't you see—*revolving?*

FIANCÉ (*who makes a practice—even already—of discouraging these sallies*). It's only an allegorical way of representing that the slave's turn has come to triumph.

FIANCÉE. Well, I don't see that he has much to *triumph* about—he's tied on like the rest of them, and it must be just as uncomfortable on the top of that wheel as the bottom.

[*Her* FIANCÉ *recognizes that allegory is thrown away upon her, and proposes to take her into the Hall and show her Gog and Magog.*

A NIECE (*to an Impenetrable Relative—whom she plants, like a heavy piece of ordnance, in front of a particular canvas*). There, aunt, what do you think of *that* now?

THE AUNT (*after solemnly staring at it with a conscientious effort to take it in*). Well, my dear, I must say it—it's very 'ighly varnished.

[*She is taken home as hopeless.*

AT THE CONFECTIONER'S.

(A SKETCH ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON.)

SCENE—*A Confectioner's Shop in a fashionable West-End thoroughfare. Close to the window is a counter, with the usual urns and appurtenances, laden with an assortment of richly-decorated pastry, and presided over by an alert and short-tempered* MANAGERESS. *The little tables are close together, and crowded with* CUSTOMERS, *the majority of whom are ladies. A couple of over-worked* WAITRESSES *are endeavouring, with but indifferent success, to satisfy everybody at once.*

CRIES FROM CUSTOMERS. Yes, two teas and *one* roll and butter—no, I mean, one roll and butter and *two* teas! "*Have I ordered?*" Why, the last time you said it was coming directly! Isn't that chocolate ready *yet?* We shall *never* catch our train! I say, waitress, I ordered coffee and cakes a quarter of an hour ago, and all we've got yet is two empty cups and a bowl of sugar! *Do* make haste with that tea! I didn't say a *cup* of tea—I said a *pot* of tea, as plain as——! (*&c., &c.*)

DUET OF WAITRESSES. Yes, sir, attend to you in one moment. Are *you* the cup of tea, madam? Oh, I'll bring you a fork for your pastry directly. There'll be some milk coming in a minute, sir. Bread-and-butter? No, sir, you can have a *roll* and butter, or cakes, if you prefer them. Excuse me, madam, when I've done attending to *this* lady. No, sir; it was the other young lady who took your order—not me. *Would* you mind letting me have the milk-jug, if you've finished with it, madam? We're rather short of them. I'll *see* if I can get you a teaspoon, sir (*&c., &c.*).

THE MANAGERESS (*all in one breath, without any stops*). Now then

Miss Simpson don't you see these cups standing here ready to be taken and there's that gentleman in the corner waiting to be attended to and tell Mrs. Binks we shall want more milk and there put out those fancy cakes do two chocolates Miss Jones well you can't have them yet because I've used all the hot water what does the girl want next butter it's no use coming *to me* for butter here take those cups to be washed up will you you leave me to look after everythink myself and customers leaving because they can't get served I declare I never saw such girls as you are in all my born days!

A MAN FROM THE LYCEUM. I'm not sure, after all, that Irving's finest moment wasn't in that last scene. I mean, when Fitzurse and those fellows came in, and he——

FIRST LADY (*at adjoining table—from the Aquarium Theatre*). Sat up on his *dear* tail, and struck out with those long hind legs of his, *sweet* thing; he took such an *interest* in it all, didn't he?

SECOND LADY (*on opposite side of table—who has been to "Hypatia"*). Oh, and didn't she look *distractingly* lovely just after she had finished lecturing?—*you* know, when she——

THIRD L. (*close by, fresh from "Charley's Aunt"*). Stepped out of the gown, and walked about in the old lady's cap and false front! I quite *cried* with laughing!

SECOND L. I liked the Proconsul—dear me, what *was* his name? So *stupid* of me—but it doesn't matter! I thought he looked so perfectly Byzantine when he came in with his lictors in the litter——

THIRD L. And played the piano so *beautifully!*

SECOND HYPATIAN L. And didn't you think Tree was very good?—that part where he found out about his daughter, and stood towering over her with a knife in his hand, and——

THIRD L. That *enormous* cigar stuck in his mouth—he was simply too *killing!* [*And so on.*

MISS CAMILLE LEON (*by voiceless motion of her lips, and expressive pantomime, for the guidance of her fiancé*, MR. FRED FORRIDGE, *who has gone to the counter to select dainties for her refection*). No, not *those*—in the *next* dish—with chocolate outside . . . no, the *long* ones—*oh*, how stupid

you are! Yes, if those are preserved cherries on the iced sugar. Very well, the *pink* one, then—that will do.

MR. FORRIDGE (*returning with a loaded plate*). I hope I've got what you wanted?

"I MUST HAVE MORE THAN THAT *somewhere!*"

MISS C. L. *Just* what I like—*how* clever of you! (*She helps herself, after dainty deliberation.*) Quite delicious! Aren't you going to have any yourself?

MR. FORR. (*engaged in surreptitiously exploring his left-hand pocket,*

with a troubled expression). Oh, thanks—presently, perhaps. (*To himself.*) I must have more than that *somewhere!*

MISS C. L. (*gai'y*). I advise you to make haste—or there'll be none left. They're too seductive for words. [*She chooses another.*

MR. FORR. (*to himself*). It *is* one-and-sixpence. Fool I was to go and forget my sovereign-purse! However—(*hopefully*)—two cups of tea at fourpence—eightpence; say three cakes at twopence—one-and-twopence—oh, I shall manage it easily, and leave a margin! (*Aloud.*) I think I won't have anything to eat—not *hungry*, don't you know.

MISS C. L. Oh, more am *I!* (*She takes a third cake.*) This has got cream inside—aren't you tempted?

MR. FORR. (*to himself*). Only fourpence to the good now—mustn't risk it! (*Aloud.*) Couldn't indeed—spoil my appetite for dinner.

MISS C. L. (*with superiority*). Oh, I never *have* any appetite for dinner. I loathe the very sight of food, somehow! But I do *wish* you'd eat something—it's so *piggish* of you not to—*really* it is! You must take just this weeny little one—to please me! (*She places it on his plate.*) Now you *can't* say no!

MR. FORR. (*to himself*). She is the *dearest* darling! (*Aloud.*) I'd do anything in the world to please you, Camille! (*To himself.*) After all, there's still *twopence!*

MISS C. L. Good boy! (*As he eats.*) Well, is it a success?

MR. FORR. (*munching*). It isn't bad—got Marchpane, or something of the kind on it.

MISS C. L. How nice! I adore Marchpane! You may go and get me one just like it, if you're *very* good.

MR. FORR. (*to himself, as he obeys her behest*). That cleans me out! Thank goodness, no gratuities are allowed here, or else—and this *must* be the last—she's had three already! If I'd only had another sixpence, I shouldn't care, but this is running it devilish close! (*Aloud, as he returns.*) This is the nearest I could get.

MISS C. L. Thanks, ever so much. Awfully nice tea this is. (*Suggestively.*) They might give one bigger cups, though!

MR. FORR. (*to himself, with pathos*). I'd give my life for her, cheerfully

—and I've got to deny her a second cup of tea! But hang it, I *must*. I can't ask her to lend me fourpence to pay the bill! (*Aloud.*) It's—er—just as well they don't. My sisters have sworn off afternoon tea altogether; some medical Johnny told them it—er—had a tendency to make the nose red!

MISS C. L. (*to herself*). Fred's *sisters!* Very likely! (*Aloud, coldly.*) If you think there is any danger of that in *my* case, of course I won't risk another cup.

MR. FORR. Oh—er—well, you never *know*, don't you know. I—er—*wouldn't*. (*To himself.*) Narrow shave that, by Jove!

MISS C. L. I think we'd better take a cab back, don't you?

MR. FORR. (*horrified*). M—much jollier walking. Streets as dry as a bone!

MISS C. L. But I want to get home and arrange the table for dinner to-night. Mother always likes me to do the flowers.

MR. FORR. Lots of time for that. You c—can't judge of the effect till it's dark, *can* you? And it will be light for hours to come.

MISS C. L. Yes, that's true. Then suppose we go and see the Burne-Joneses, now we're so near? They don't close till six.

MR. FORR. (*to himself*). It *would* have been jolly; but, half-a-crown, when I can't even run to a *catalogue!* No! (*Aloud.*) It—it's getting so dark—can't do 'em justice by artificial light, do you think? And—well, to tell you the honest truth, Camille, after the Old Masters, you know—I—I don't feel—and I *have* seen them, you know!

MISS C. L. (*pouting*). I thought you might have cared to see them again—with *me*—but it doesn't in the least matter . . . Fred, I don't care about this cake you got me—it's dull. I think I shall leave it, and try one of these white-and-green ones instead. [*She does.*

MR. FORR. (*to himself, with a beaded brow*). Broke!! And for an extra twopence! As likely as not, she hasn't even got her purse with her. And she'll think I'm so beastly mean! Why on earth didn't I let her go to the Aërated Bread-shop, as she wanted? It would have been all right then.

MISS C. L. I'm afraid you're rather bored, Fred—you don't seem to be enjoying yourself quite ; *do* you ?

MR. FORR. (*in agony*). Oh, I *am*—I'm all right, Camille, only I—I'm always like this after the Old Masters, you know.

MISS C. L. So sorry I made you bring me—don't you think we had better pay, and go home ?

MR. FORR. (*to himself*). Now for it! (*He pulls himself together.*) W—waitress, w—what have I to pay, please ?

WAITRESS. Two teas, eightpence ; one, two—*six* cakes you've had, I think, sir ? One-and-eightpence altogether.

MR. FORR. (*with a gasp*). Oh! (*He fetches up two coins abjectly from his pocket*). I—I'm sorry to say that I—I've o—only one shilling and (*with a start of intense relief*) half-a-sovereign, so (*with recovered dignity*) I'm afraid I must ask you to give me change. (*To* MISS C. L.) I—I was only joking about the Burne-Joneses, darling. I'd like to see them *awfully*—with you. And we can walk home through the park, or take a cab afterwards, just as *you* feel about it. *Do* say you'll come !

(MISS LEON *graciously consents, and* MR. FORRIDGE *follows her out of the shop with restored equanimity, as Scene closes in.*

CHOOSING CHRISTMAS TOYS.

(A SKETCH IN THE LOWTHER ARCADE.)

Between the sloping banks of toys, and under a dense foliage of coloured rosettes, calico banners, and Japanese-lanterns, the congested Stream of Custom oozes slowly along, with an occasional overflow into the back-waters of the shops behind, while the Stall-keepers keep up a batrachian and almost automatic croak of invitation.

FOND GRANDMOTHER. So you've chosen a box of soldiers, have you, Franky?—very well. Now what shall we get for little Elsie and baby?

FRANKY (*promptly*). Another box of soldiers would do nicely for Elsie, grandmamma, and—*I* know, a fort for baby!

GRANDM. (*doubtfully*). But they're such *little* tots—they won't know how to play with them.

FRANKY. Oh, but I can *teach* them, you know, grandmamma.

GRANDM. That's right—I like to see a boy kind to his little sisters.

[*She adopts* MASTER FRANKY'S *disinterested suggestion.*

A MOTHER. Now, Percy, it's all nonsense—you *can't* want any more toys—those you've got are as good as new. (*To her* FRIEND.) He's such a boy for taking care of his things—he'll hardly trust his toys out of their boxes, and won't allow any one else to *touch* them!

THE FRIEND. Dear little fellow—then I'm sure he *deserves* to be given a new toy for being so careful!

THE MOTHER. Well, he'll give me no peace till I *do* buy him something, I know—but mind this, Percy, it's only to keep you quiet, and I'm not going to buy Eddie anything. (*To* FRIEND.) He gives all *his* things away as it is!

[*Master Percy takes both these valuable moral lessons to heart.*

MRS. STILTON (*to her less prosperous Sister-in-law*, MRS. BLOOMOLD). Nonsense, Vinnie, I won't *hear* of it! Reggie has more toys already than he knows what to do with!

MRS. BLOOM. (*apologetically*). Of course, my dear Sophia, I know your children are born to every——but still, I have no one but myself *now*, you know—and if I *might*—it would be such a *pleasure!*

MRS. STILTON. I have already told you there is not the slightest occasion for your spending your money in any such foolish manner. I hope that is enough.

MRS. BLOOM. I'm sure he would like one of these little water-carts —now *wouldn't* you, Reggie? [REGGIE *assents shyly.*

MRS. STILTON. Buy him one, by all means—he will probably take the colour out of my new carpets with it—but, of course, *that's* of no consequence to *you!*

MRS. BLOOM. Oh dear, I *quite* forgot your beautiful carpets. No, to be sure, that might——but one of those little butcher's shops, now!—they're really *quite* cheap!

MRS. S. *I* always thought cheapness was a question of what a person could *afford.*

MRS. BLOOM. But I *can* afford it, dear Sophia—thanks to dear John's bounty, and—and *yours.*

MRS. S. You mustn't thank *me.* *I* had nothing to do with it. I warned John at the time that it would only——and it seems I was right. And Reggie has a butcher's shop—a really good one—already. In fact, I couldn't tell you what he *hasn't* got!

REGGIE. *I* can, though, Aunt Vinnie. I haven't got a train, for *one* thing! (*To his mother, as she drags him on.*) I *should* like a little tin train, to go by clockwork on rails, so. Do let auntie——what's she staying behind for?

MRS. BLOOM. (*catching them up, and thrusting a box into* REGGIE'S *hands*). There, dear boy, there's your train—with Aunt Vinnie's love! (REGGIE *opens the box, and discovers a wooden train.*) What's the matter, darling? Isn't it——?

MRS. S. He had rather set his heart on a clock-work one with rails—

which I was thinking of getting for him—but I am sure he's very much obliged to his aunt all the same—*aren't* you, Reginald?

REGGIE (*with a fortunate inspiration*). Thank you *ever* so much, auntie! And I like this train better than a tin one—because all the doors open really—it's *exactly* what I wanted!

MRS. S. That's *so* like Reggie—he never says anything to hurt people's feelings if he can possibly help it.

MRS. B. (*with meek ambiguity*). Ah, dear Sophia, you set him such an *example*, you see! [REGGIE *wonders why she squeezes his hand so.*

A VAGUE MAN (*to* SALESWOMAN). Er—I want a toy of some sort—for a *child*, don't you know. (*As if he might require it for an elderly person.*) At least, it's not *exactly* a child—it can *talk*, and all that.

SALESW. Will you step inside, sir? We've a large assortment within to select from. Is it for a boy or a girl?

THE VAGUE MAN. It's a boy—that is, its name's Evelyn—of course, that's a girl's name too; but it had better be something that doesn't—I mean something it can't—— [*He runs down.*

SALESW. I *quite* understand, sir. One of these little 'orses and carts are a very nice present for a child—(*with languid commendation*)—the little 'orse takes out and all.

THE V. M. Um—yes—but I want something more—a different *kind* of thing altogether.

SALESW. We sell a great many of these rag-dolls; all the clothes take off and on.

THE V. M. Isn't that rather——and then, for a boy, eh?

SALESW. P'raps a box of wooden soldiers *would* be a more suitable toy for a boy, certainly.

THE V. M. Soldiers, eh?—yes—but you see, it might turn out to be a girl after all—and then——

SALESW. I see, you want something that would do equally well for either. *Here's* a toy now. (*She brings out a team of little tin swans on wheels.*) You fix a stick in the end—so—and wheel it in front of you, and all the little swans go up and down.

[*She wheels it up and down without enthusiasm.*

"ER—I WANT A TOY OF SOME SORT—FOR A *child*, DON'T YOU KNOW!"

THE V. M. (*inspecting it feebly*). Oh—the swans go up and down, eh? It isn't quite—but very likely it won't—may as well have that as something else. Yes, you can send it to—let me see—is it Hampstead or Notting Hill they're living at now? (*To the* SALESWOMAN, *who naturally cannot assist him.*) No, of course, *you* wouldn't know. Never mind, I'll take it with me—don't trouble to wrap it up!

[*He carries it off—to forget it promptly in a hansom.*

A GENIAL UNCLE (*entering with Nephews and Nieces*). Plenty to choose from here, eh? Look about and see what you'd like best.

JANE (*the eldest, sixteen, and "quite a little woman"*). I'm sure they would much rather *you* chose for them, uncle!

UNCLE. Bless me, *I* don't know what boys and girls like now-a-days—they must choose for themselves!

SALESW. (*wearily*). Perhaps one of the young gentlemen would like a dredging-machine? The handle turns, you see, and all the little buckets go round the chain and take up sand or mud—or there's a fire-engine, *that's* a nice toy, throws a stream of real water.

[TOMMY, *aged eleven, is charmed with the dredging-machine, while the fire-engine finds favour in the eyes of* BOBBY, *aged nine.*

JANE (*thoughtfully*). I'm afraid the dredging-machine is rather a *messy* toy, uncle, and the fire-engine wouldn't do at all, either—it would be sure to encourage them to play with fire. Bobby, if you say "blow!" once more, I shall tell mother. Uncle is the best judge of what's suitable for you!

UNCLE. Well, there's something in what you say, Jenny. We must see if we can't find something better, that's all.

SALESW. I've a little toy-stige, 'ere—with scenes and characters in "*Richard Cured o' Lyin'*" complete and ready for acting—how would that do? [TOMMY *and* BOBBY *cheer up visibly at this suggestion.*

JANE. I *don't* think mother would like them to have *that*, uncle—it might give them a *taste* for theatres, you know!

UNCLE. Ha—so it might—very thoughtful of you, Jane—mustn't get in your mother's bad books; never do! What's in these boxes? soldiers? How about these, eh, boys? [*The boys are again consoled.*

JANE (*gently*). They're getting *rather* too big for such babyish things as soldiers, uncle! I tell you what *I* think—if you got a nice puzzle-map for Tommy—he's so backward in his geography—and a drawing-slate for Bobby, who's got on so nicely with his drawing, and a little work-box—not an *expensive* one, of course—for Winnie, that would be *quite*——

[*These sisterly counsels are rewarded by ungrateful and rebellious roars.*

UNCLE. Tommy, did I hear you address your sister as a "beast"? Come—come! And what are you all turning on the waterworks for, eh? Strikes me, Jane, you haven't *quite* hit off their tastes!

JANE (*virtuously*). I have only told you what I know mother would *wish* them to have, uncle; and, even if I *am* to have my ankles kicked for it, I'm sure I'm right!

UNCLE. Always a consolation, my dear Jenny. I'm sure no nephew of *mine* would kick his sister, except by the merest accident—so let's say no more of that. But it's no use getting 'em what they don't like; so suppose we stick to the fire-engine, and the other concern—theatre, is it, Johnny?—Very well—and don't you get *me* into trouble over 'em, that's all. And Winnie would like a doll, eh?—that's all right. Now everybody's provided for—except Jane!

JANE (*frostily*). Thank you, uncle—but you seem to forget I'm not *exactly* a child! [*She walks out of the shop with dignity.*

UNCLE. Hullo! Put my foot in it again! But we can't leave Jenny out of it—*can* we? Must get her a present of some sort over the way . . . Here, Tommy, my boy, you can tell me something she'd like.

BOBBY (*later—to* TOMMY). What did you tell uncle to get for Jane!

TOMMY (*with an unholy chuckle*). Why, a box with one of those puff-things in it. Don't you know how we caught her powdering her nose with mother's? And uncle *got* her one too! *Won't* she be shirty just!

[*They walk out in a ecstasy of anticipation, as Scene closes.*

THE END.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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